PC REVIEW • Issue 53 • Graphics powerhouse • Choosing the right inkjet • March 1996

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PC REVIEW

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MARCH 1996 • £4.99
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* RRP as of May 93 – source Claris. It's best value cover CD available.



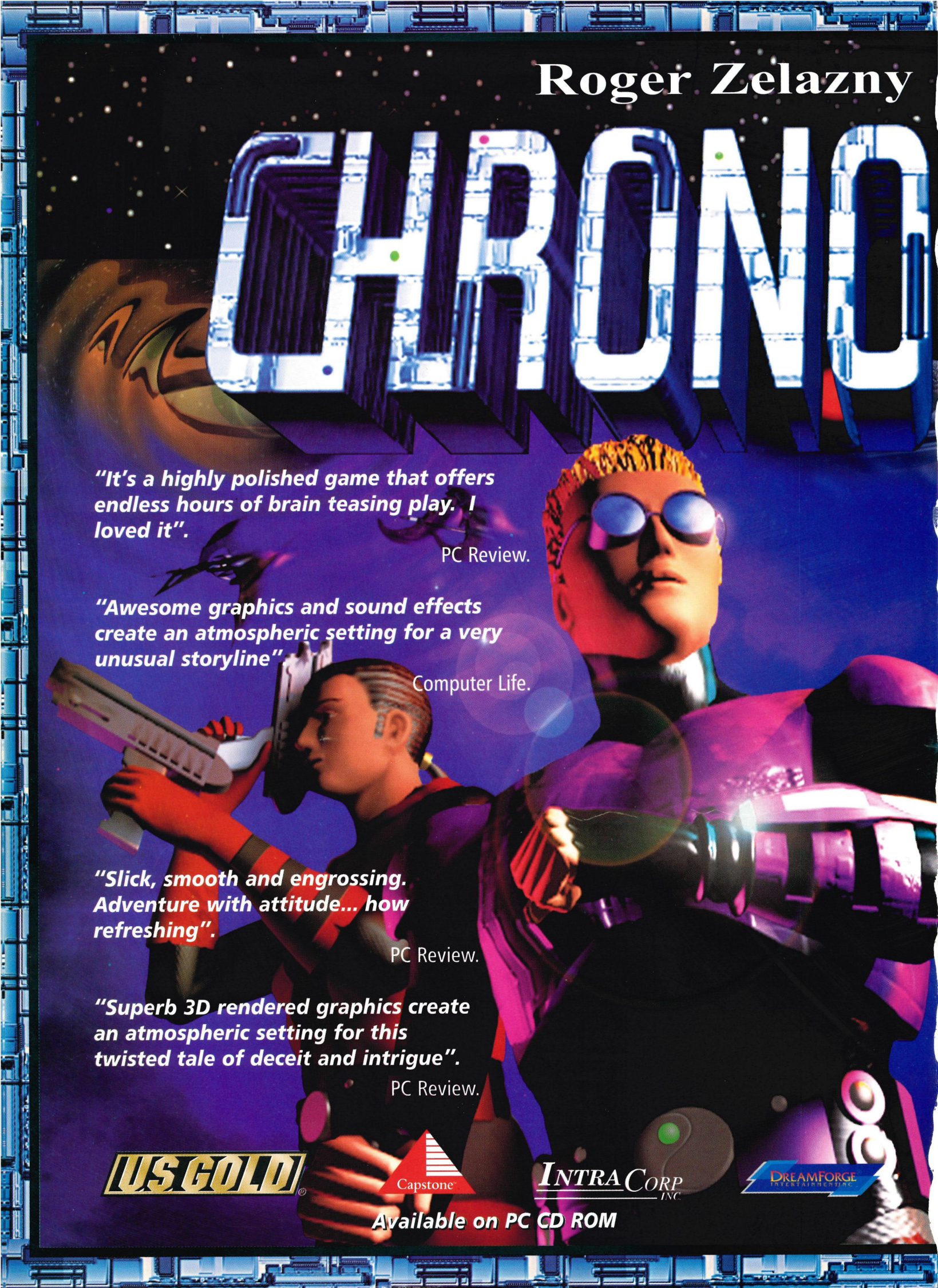
Also inside...

- Inkjets for under £500
- Best joysticks and pads
- Chronomaster giveaway and science fiction feature

ON CD-ROM THIS MONTH

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Roger Zelazny
CHRONO
"It's a highly polished game that offers endless hours of brain teasing play. I loved it".
PC Review.
"Awesome graphics and sound effects create an atmospheric setting for a very unusual storyline".
Computer Life.
"Slick, smooth and engrossing. Adventure with attitude... how refreshing".
PC Review.
"Superb 3D rendered graphics create an atmospheric setting for this twisted tale of deceit and intrigue".
PC Review.
U.S.GOLD
Capstone
INTRACORP INC
DREAMFORGE INTERTAINMENT
Available on PC CD ROM

and Jane Lindskold PRESENT

MASTER

Find yourself on a mission to re-start time itself

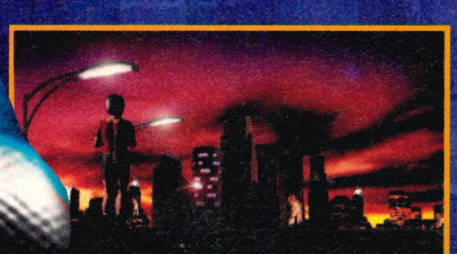
On a futuristic suburban street the night sky is backlit with explosions, the rumble of munitions is audible at a distance.

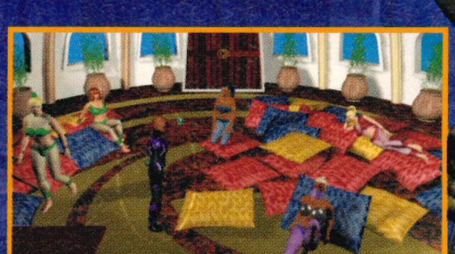
This is the final wipeout of Pasqua. An entire world raided and stripped of its wealth, its citizens killed or sold into slavery.

The perpetrators seek immunity from justice through the purchase of new identities and the creation of fabulous new universes.

Korda, the Chronomaster, has a mission to find them.

In this groundbreaking graphic adventure, find yourself on a quest in worlds where time has stopped and science and magic co-exist.



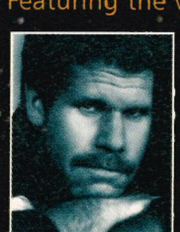




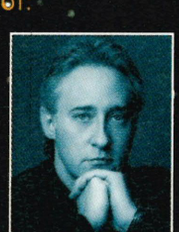
Roger Zelazny

Is one of the premier science fiction writers of his generation. During his career he has won six Hugos and three Nebulas as well as an array of other major awards in the field. His Novella "The Last Defender of Camelot" was adapted by George R.R. Martin as an episode of the new Twilight Zone.

Featuring the voices of:



Ron Perlman
("Beauty & The Beast")
as "KORDA, the CHRONOMASTER"



Brent Spiner
("Star Trek: The Next Generation")
as "MILO"

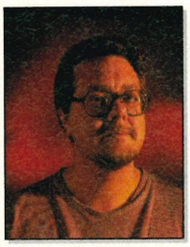


Lolita Davidovich
("Intersection")
as "JESTER"

Software and Art ©1995 IntraCorp Entertainment, Inc. All rights reserved. Portions of the program ©1995 Dreamforge™ Intertainment.
Sound Operating System ©1995 Human Machine Interfaces, Inc. Software theme based on a science fiction story by Roger Zelazny and Jane Lindskold. Chronomaster and Capstone are trademarks of IntraCorp Entertainment, Inc. All other Trademarks and copyrights acknowledged. Produced under license by U.S. Gold Ltd., Units 2/3 Holford Way, Holford, Birmingham B6 7AX. 0121 625 3366. U.S. Gold is a registered trademark of U.S. Gold Ltd. All other trademarks are acknowledged.

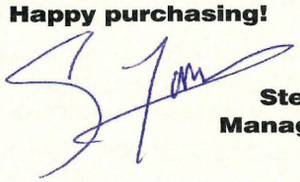
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March 1996 Issue 53



Old habits die hard, and although my ability to draw hasn't improved since I was six — just check out this month's Hatstand on page 144 to see what I mean — in my free time I still like to dabble in art, OK doodle actually. Now no amount of high tech software is going to turn PC Plod into a Constable or a Turner, but, when it comes to keeping an idle mind at bay, you could do far worse than loading that shareware drawing package and seeing what you can do. It was a habit I acquired back in my bad old, sad old days of owning an Amiga, and now — thanks to the power that's packed in the PC — it's a habit I can't quite kick. So, enough of me, now it's over to you: enjoy this month's story on PC graphics and if you're a CD owner, load up the version of Paint Shop Pro on the CD and enjoy using it.

And there's plenty more in this issue, starting with a cracking games section, a food-rich Surf of the Month and not one but two buyers guides among the technical pages. Happy purchasing!



Steve James,
Managing Editor

Painter 4

114

So what can we say about Painter 4 that isn't a compliment? It paints, it draws, it even makes the hot chocolate — Tenji Takeda takes the lid off the pot to discover possibly the best graphics package for the PC – ever. Serious software doesn't come much better or more comprehensive than this — at any price....



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Coverdisc

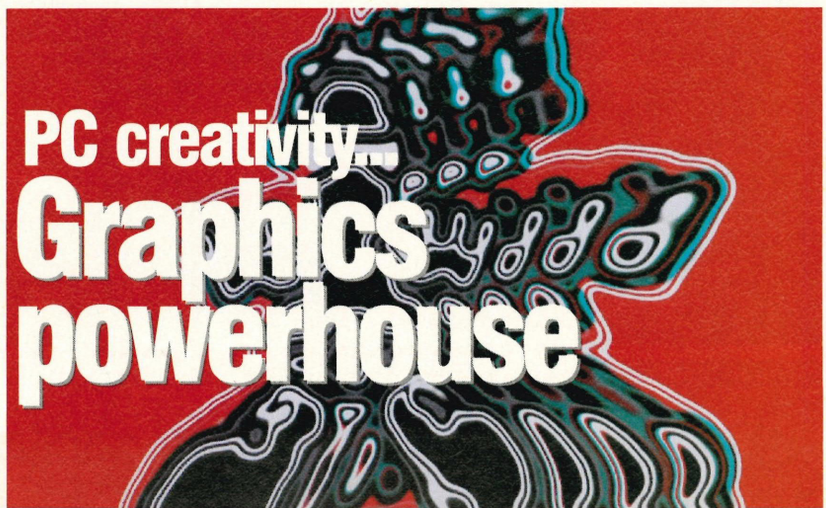
Give us a V, give us an F, and then, if you please, a great big M. And what do you have? VFM, Value For Money, the best darned coverdisc in Christendom, now sporting a brand new coat of multimedia gloss thanks to our Ian.



Cover Story

6

OK, OK, appearances don't actually count, we know, but when push comes to shove it's how good it looks onscreen that counts. So transport yourself to the rendered, photo-manipulated world of artists, both professional and of the DIY variety.



TS



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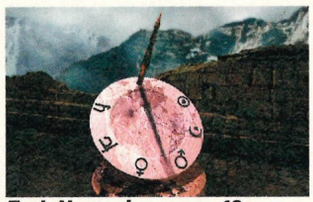
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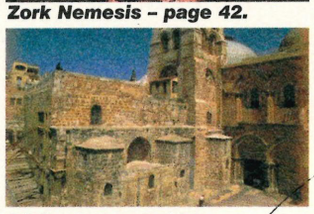
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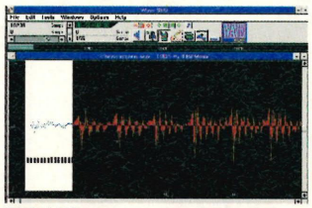
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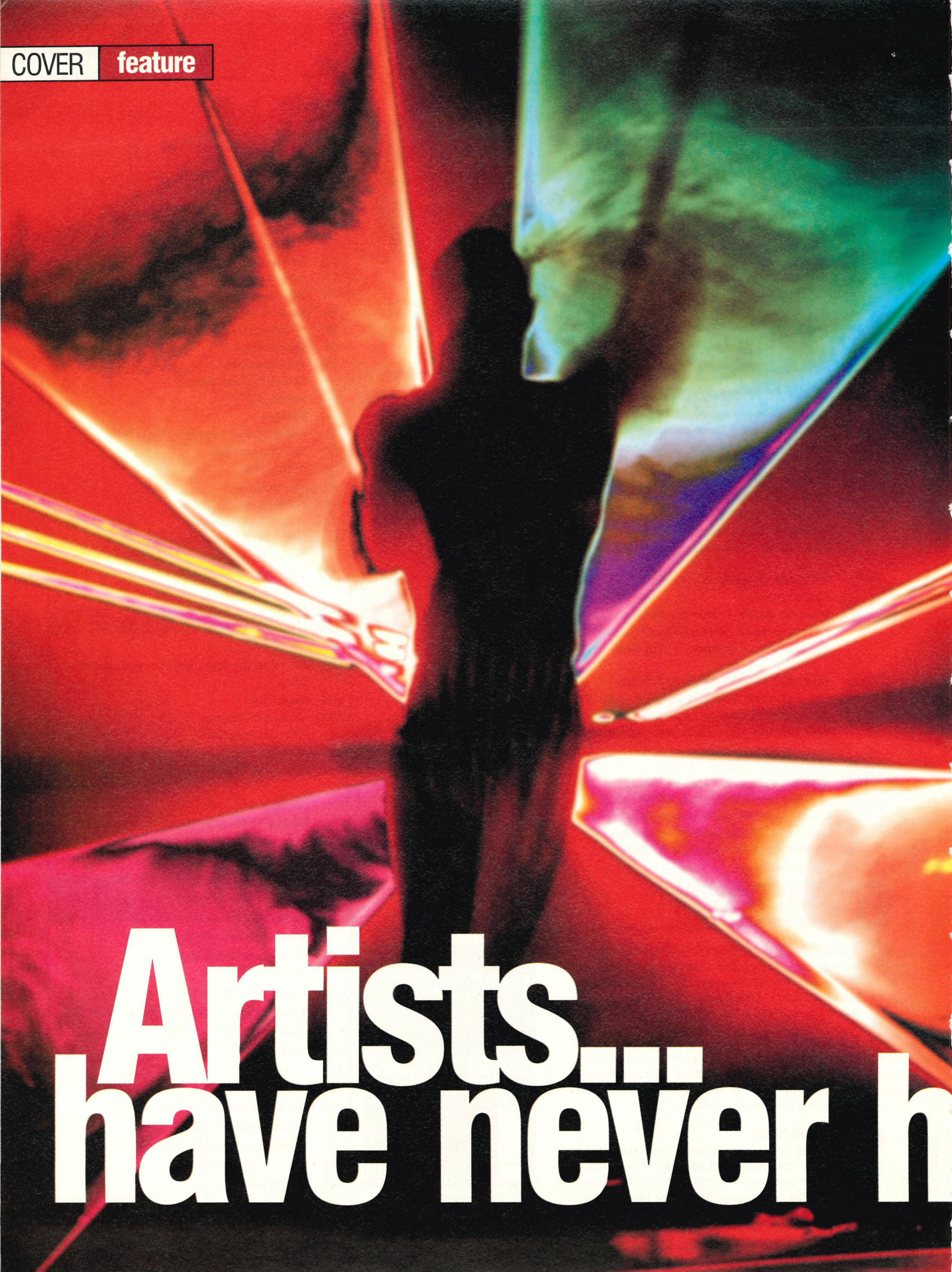
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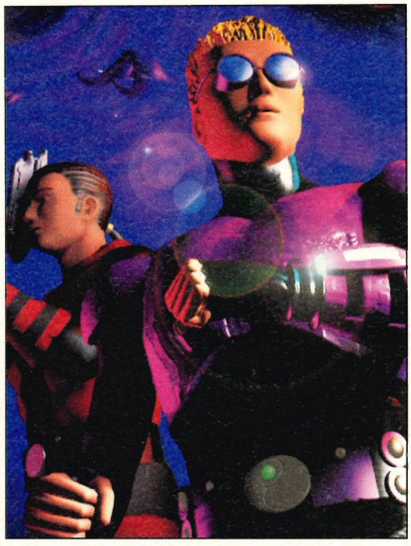
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Artists... have never h



Digital design? Pixelated pictures? Computerised cartoonery? Whatever you call it there's no doubt that the PC is at the forefront of computer-aided artwork. Rik Henderson illustrates that even short people can now paint the Sistine chapel.

Art is indefinable. Anything can be described as art, and often has been, from half a cow in pickle to excreta smeared over a blank canvas. But if you walk up to anybody in the street and ask them what they consider to be 'art', they'll generally say "It's a picture, innit?". You see, a 'picture' is far more easily definable, and is the way that absolutely anybody at all can create art with the minimum of fuss, masterpiece or not.

Drawing or painting pictures is also one of very ways we find of expressing ourselves. As children we took great pride in our hand prints and swirly patterns, no matter how much artistic talent we possessed. And now it is becoming one of the very first things that anybody ever does with computers, whether you just scribble with a mouse in Junior school or get a brand spanking new PC out of the box and boot up Paintbrush. At least with a computer you don't have to clean up any mess at the end of the day. It's simpler and quicker to create a picture on a PC than by any regular methods and this is what makes everybody, from the amateur to the professional, photographer to pseudo-Picasso, want to dabble with the medium.

In-game shots

Creating rendered 3D graphics such as those seen in Chronomaster or games like Myst and 11th Hour is quite a complex process. Most artists make sketches of the characters or locations beforehand to get a rough idea of how they will look, but some begin work on computer straight away. Using Silicon Graphics workstations (specialised computers used for graphics) or a rendering package such as 3D Studio (as in Chronomaster's case), the artist first creates a wireframe model of the location or character. These can be rotated to see how they look from all angles, or animated if required. Next, the wireframes are filled using blocks of colour, giving shapes a rough, polygonal look. Finally, the polygons are smoothed, shaded and light-sourced to give a more natural appearance.

Picture perfect

In fact, the professionals are not only dabbling with computer-aided art — anywhere you look now it is an important facet of their work. One specific area that has benefitted immensely from the help of normal, domestic-based PCs is the production of comics. Most comics you can pick up today, American or British, use PCs to add colour to the illustrated pages (which are still generally done by hand). The colourist will scan in the original drawings and use specialist software to give the artwork life. Seeing as this process used to be done with a hundred or so Pantone pens and a colour mark-up sheet for the printers, you can imagine exactly how much time this useful new technique can now save an artist.

One person who has gone a step further than this is Judge Dredd co-creator and 2000AD artist, Carlos Ezquerra. He now uses Photoshop to create every panel rather than just adding the colour. Not only does this allow for better shading effects, but photo-manipulation itself can be used to make the backgrounds, most especially the landscapes of Mega-City One in Judge Dredd, that much more realistic.

Then of course there's the 3D explosion. The most obvious field in which 3D graphics has been exploited to the hilt is that of animation (which is, after all, just a collection of single pictures flicked through at great speed). Almost any game worth its salt nowadays is graced by a beautifully rendered 3D animation sequence. Command & Conquer and Mechwarrior 2 both had fantastic intro and cut-sequences, and even though they were created using Silicon Graphics machines, the new wave of games will use the promise of 3D Studio and other PC rendering packages to great effect. For a start it's a lot cheaper, and now PCs themselves are fast enough for it all to be more practical.

The first media foray into this field was in advertising (such as the Smarties ads), but now we also have animated movies. Yes siree, computer graphics have grown up enough to be included in the biggest Entertainment business of all, and we're not talking about some Bolivian movie about housewives. At last, Disney hasn't simply added the odd computer effect (as in Aladdin), but created an entirely computer-generated movie — Toy Story.

There's big bucks in computer art nowadays, so anybody that gets in on the act now is sure to profit later, and that means you or me. And even if you've no desire to create huge, sprawling computer animations, you can always just draw a Birthday Card for a unsuspecting relative. At least it's cheaper.

Continued over ▶

ad it better

Techno Disney

March sees the UK release of the worldís first computer animated feature film, Disney's Toy Story. Adam Peters talks to the man responsible for the animation.

Peter Docter made his first flip book at the age of eight. He went on to study character animation at the California Institute of Arts. Peter spent seven years producing hand-drawn animation, for Disney amongst others, before joining Pixar Animation Studios in 1990 and making the jump to working on computer. He has animated and directed several US commercials for the company, and has worked as Supervising Animator on Toy Story since the very start of the project, some four-and-a-half years ago. PC Review caught up with him over a trans-Atlantic telephone line, and resisted making "Docter on call" jokes for long enough to ask him about computers and cartoons...

PCR: How is animating on a computer different from traditional hand-drawn animation? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

Docter: "The thought process is the same — you're thinking what the character's motivation is, etc — but the technique is different. There are certain tasks that are easier with each medium. On computers, for instance, anything involving physical motion is much easier to do. Things like a ball bouncing look so natural it's spooky. On the other hand, transformations like those in Aladdin (eg a character turning into a goose) are much easier to draw by hand."

Is there anything you try to avoid when animating by computer?

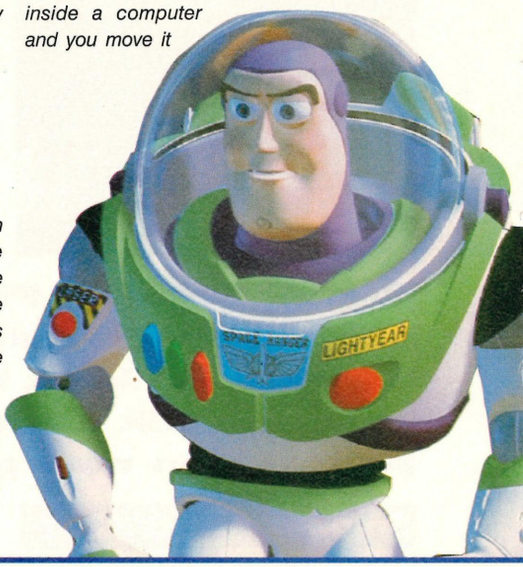
"Yes, humans. In Toy Story we've tried to style the human characters so they are not photo realistic, and we've been moderately successful. Everyone in the audience is an expert on humans, they know the subtle nuances of how people look when they move in a certain way. This is impossible to recreate accurately on a computer. Anything organic is difficult. Geometric things with straight lines are a lot easier."

Digitisation is used a lot in video games. Do you think a generation weaned on video games wants more from film animation as a result?

"Not that I am aware of. I haven't seen any video games with better animation than Disney or Warner Brothers films. There's still an element of jerkiness, with glitches, hops and skips as the game moves between different pre-generated pictures."

How easy would it be to produce a 3D film on computer?

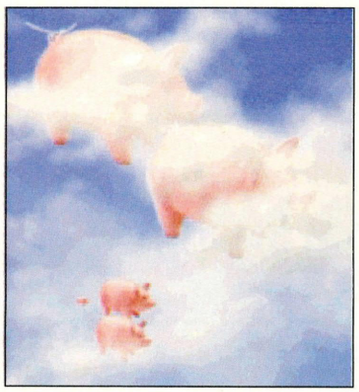
"Very easy. It's like having a marionette inside a computer and you move it



Disney's Toy Story — setting a new standard in animated graphics. ▶

Creation Applications

These are the programs that allow you to create digital art on your PC, and as such feature more painting tools (air brushes, lots of different media types – chalk, ink pen, pastels, oil etc) than photo correction and manipulation facilities — for these kinds of tools see the pages 14 and 15. Both 2D and 3D rendering tools are covered here: 2D is fairly obvious, 3D however allows you to create pictures in three dimensions (height, width and depth). Programs of this kind also automatically figure out things like reflection and shadow positions for you, allowing the creation of stunningly realistic images relatively easily.





Painter 4

From the king of natual media painting programs, Painter 4 is Fractal Design's latest and greatest release. Although expensive, it's very, very powerful with a huge selection different brushes, pens and paper types. It's got practically every graphic painting tool you could want, not to mention loads of drawing and image manipulation tools! The quality of the pictures that can created with this program is quite litterally stunning and really do look like they've been created on real paper using brushes. Take a look at the review on pages 114 and 115 this very issue for more details on Painter 4.

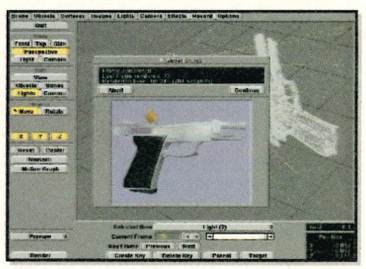
Price: £399
Manufacturer: Fractal Design
Contact: (0181) 200 8282
Score: 9



Dabbler 2

Dabbler 2.0 is from the same company that produces Painter 4 but is considerably less powerful. However, it does allow you to "dabble" and paint onscreen using a wide selection of different painting tools, all of which work in a very similar manner to their real-world counterparts. Dabbler is also wonderfully easy to use, with an interface that looks and acts like an art studio — complete with wooden draws that pull out to review inks and pens held inside! Overall however Dabbler 2 is far too simplistic for serious use, and too expensive for an entry level application.

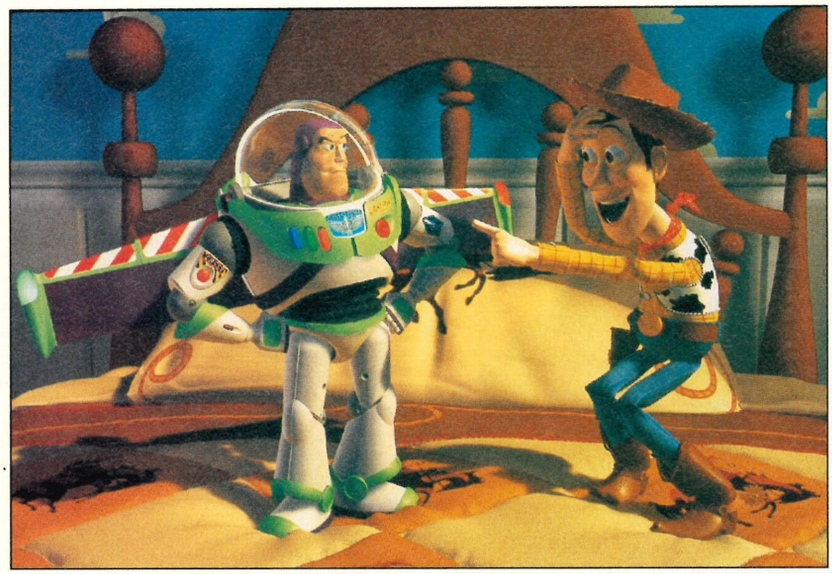
Price: £75
Manufacturer: Fractal Design
Contact: (0181) 200 8282
Score: 6



LightWave

One of the newer 3D picture creation programs, and definitely one of the better ones. It originally came from the Amiga , and in the USA has been used by many studios and TV stations (Babylon 5 and Star Trek: TNG are two of the more high profile shows it's been used on). Its rendering quality is easily as good as the mighty Autodesk 3D Studio, and it also offers a great deal of flexibility. Many of its operations are done in a very roundabout way and it's not particularly intuitive. Having said this, it's a lot cheaper than 3DStudio and, with work, capable of producing similar results — worth a look.

Price: £816.62
Manufacturer: NewTek
Contact: (01252) 718 300
Score: 7



▲ ***110 computers were used to render the individual frames of the film.***

around. We could make the whole of Toy Story a 3D film by simply using a second camera view to create a different image, on the same principle as those Viewmaster toys. I'm not sure if people want to wear 3D glasses, though."

When powerful animation packages become available on home computers, won't people stay at home and make their own cartoons instead of going out and watching yours?

"As home packages become more powerful, further things will be possible. High-end packages will increase in quality too. As the hardware and software improve in sophistication, so will professional computer animation. People can only go so far at home. Everyone's got pencils and paper at home, but we still admire Picasso and Rembrandt."

What advice would you give to a PC Review reader interested in getting into computer animation?

"If you're interested in the sort of stuff that Pixar do — character animation — then focus on that, whatever the medium. Look for a simple idea that's good to watch. There's a temptation with computers to monkey around with effects; flying through space, spinning cubes, etc. Very pretty, but not exactly interesting to watch. The ideas are the important thing."

Toy Story: Painting by Numbers

Toy Story is the world's first computer animated feature film, produced for Disney by California-based Pixar Animation Studios. Billed as a "buddy movie", it tells the story of two toys in a world where toys have lives of their own when humans aren't around. Every character, object and background was computer-generated using high-powered graphics workstations.

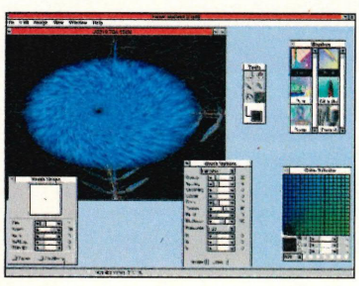
400 sculpted models were made for digitization and 2000 texture maps were created, some of them actually scanned from photographs. An average of 700 different animation control points were used for each of the main characters. The star Woody (voiced by Tom Hanks) has 212 animation points on his face alone.

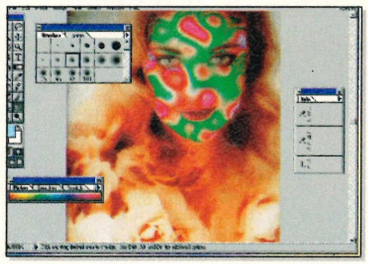
110 computers were used to render the individual frames of film, each frame taking up to 20 hours to fully render. In total there are 110,064 frames of computer animation in the finished movie. If you're thinking of making something like this yourself, a hard disk upgrade might be a good idea — all the film information for Toy Story takes up 1000 million Megs of storage space. And over 800,000 machine hours were needed to render the final elements at a maximum output of 3.5 minutes of completed animation.

Fans of cinema queueing take note: Toy Story will be out on March 22nd.

Photo-editing & Image Manipulation

Whereas the painting programs on the previous page were used to create pictures, photo-editing programs are used to correct, distort or apply visual effects to existing pictures. They started out as utilities to help scanner operators improve scanned pictures, boosting the contrast and brightness, for example. Over time, however, they have become flexible enough to allow the creation of stunning visual effects using general picture editing facilities. It's important to realise that programs of this type, more so than any other type of graphics package (with the possible exception of 3D rendering programs), swallow hardware resources. Photoshop for instance won't even load without 16Mb of RAM, and this is before you load a picture!

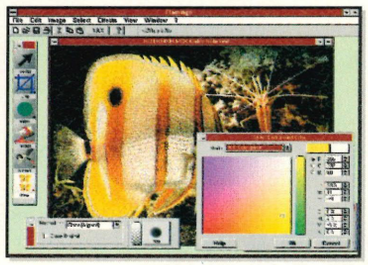




PhotoShop

The undisputed king of image manipulation both on the PC and Mac. It does practically everything you could ask for editing photographs and other 24-bit pictures. It's particularly well suited for use with pictures that are to be printed or laid out in a DTP program, being able to split pictures down into CMYK plates for example — needed by professional printers. The only disadvantage of PhotoShop (aside from its huge price tag) is that it's not particularly good at editing really large pictures, tending to slow down quite a lot — even on the very fastest Pentium systems.

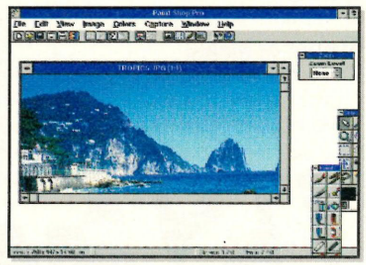
Price: £500
Manufacturer: Adobe Systems
Contact: (0131) 451 6888
Score: 8



Flamingo

Flamingo is a fully featured image processing package but has the advantage of being available in a Lite shareware version so you can try it out first. The full version supports most of the major file formats found on PCs (GIF, BMP, PCX, TIF, JPEG, Targa etc) but misses several important formats from other computers — IFF for example. It has a reasonable range of filters (special effects) including blur, unsharp, and contour trace, plus a variety of image operators — scale, rotate, and cropping. If you don't like PaintShop Pro for any particular reason, take a look at this instead.

Price: £49.95
Manufacturer: Springsoft
Contact: (01352) 770049
Score: 7



PaintShop Pro

Quite probably the most common PC graphics package outside of PC Paintbrush (supplied free with Windows) PaintShop Pro is powerful, fully featured and best of all, it's shareware *[it's also on this month's PC Review cover disk — ed]*. It loads just about every picture file format you can think of, and then allows you to apply a range of special effects. These include sharpening the picture, reducing the number of colours, and retouching. The last thing to say about this program is that at PC Review, where we could use any graphics package we wanted, it's the tool everyone uses...

Price: £39.99
Manufacturer: Jasc
Contact: (01295) 258 335
Score: 8

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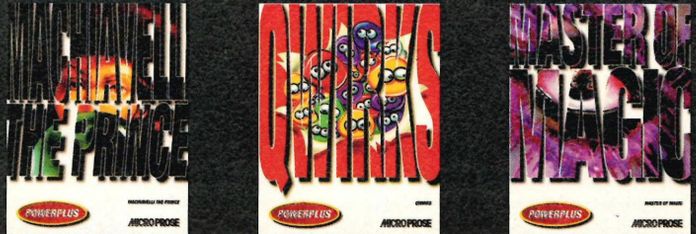
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The Camera Never Lies?



Jamie B might be short of surname, but he's not short of talent, at least not according to The Guardian. A few months ago it awarded him its prestigious Student Photographer of the Year award for 1995. This raised a few eyebrows, since it was the first time the paper had given the award to a photographer who uses computers to manipulate his pictures. Does this mean such techniques have now come of age? We tracked the award winner down and asked him...

PCR: How long have you been taking photos, and when did you start interfering with them on a computer?

B: "I've been taking pictures since the start of the Sixth form where I was doing science A-levels. I taught myself and really got into it, taking a year off and travelling to Australia and the States with my camera. I knew I wanted to do photography at University, but because of the A-levels I'd got I couldn't do a straight photography course. I enrolled on the Photography and Electronic Imaging course at the

You used to be able to trust a photo in a newspaper. Not any more. Chances are it's been tampered with on a computer...

Picture this

Think you can spot a computer manipulated photo? Those tacky Sun style "here's how Anthea Turner would look topless" photos, with their "on our computer" and "just for fun" caveats, are just the most visible tip of the iceberg. A lot of fashion and advertising pictures have been through a computer artist to "blend away" any spots or blemishes on the model's skin. Paparazzi pictures taken from a long way away will have been through Photoshop sharpening filters.

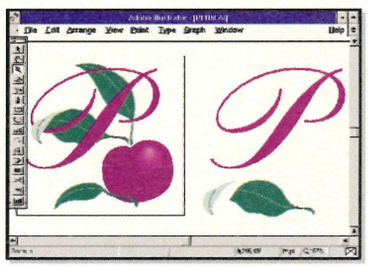
There are a number of ethical problems relating to the ways in which these techniques can be used, aptly summed up by the photo processing lab Truprint in their new catalogue. The company advertises its computer image manipulation service with the sinister line: "You may want to remove an item or person from a photo, or you may want to put two people from different photos together on the same one."

It's 1996. Don't believe anything you haven't seen with your own eyes.

Drawing Programs

For creating beautiful illustrations, logos, and diagrams you'll want a structured drawing program. These allow pictures to be drawn from shapes, instead of pixels. Even better, because you can reshape and distort the objects that structured drawing programs use to make up their pictures, it's much easier to draw with such programs as opposed to normal pixel paint packages — where you have to position and colour every pixel. These programs also typically demand lower hardware requirements than full blooded paint programs, so if you're running on a budget they're again worth consideration. The only disadvantage is you'll never get real photographic quality pictures from such applications — however with the bigger programs you can include bitmap pictures in the drawing.

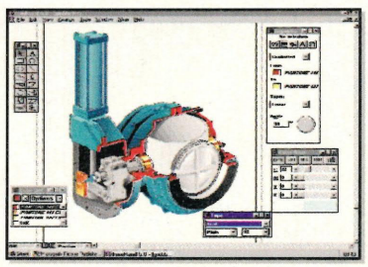




Illustrator 4

One of the grand-daddies of structured drawing. Adobe Illustrator is pretty powerful but also fiendishly difficult to use. In terms of power drawing there's not much that can touch Illustrator (with the exception of Freehand) and in skilled hands just about any picture can be created with it. Sadly there's a price to pay for this power. Forget templates, wizards and other user-friendly items of modern Windows applications, Illustrator is an in-your-face, get-your-hands dirty old-style program that, while admittedly being able to create impressive artwork, will scare the pants off most users.

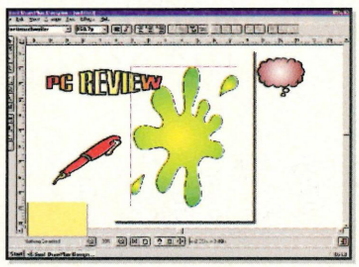
Price: £340
Manufacturer: Adobe Systems
Contact: (0131) 451 6888
Score: 7



Freehand 5

Freehand 5 is a tool for professional graphic designers but is also easy enough to use that anyone can have a go — unlike Illustrator. In many ways Freehand is also now more powerful than Illustrator. It allows you to get stuck in and tailor practically every setting of every tool and effect. There's little you can't do with it if you spend the time. The downside is it's harder and slower to knock up quick logos and designs than in, say, DrawPlus. If you can afford the high price, and are prepared to spend time learning how to use it Freehand is a must-have design tool.

Price: £450
Manufacturer: Macromedia
Contact: (01344) 761111
Score: 8



Draw Plus 2

For home, small office and users who only want the occasional graphic, Draw Plus is ideal. It comes with a large collection of pre-drawn clipart that you can use directly or modify to create your own pictures quickly, and it also comes with a wide selection of drawing objects for building complex logos and shapes. Better still, unlike many simpler programs, once you've got one of these objects or wrapped text to a shape, you can then go in and tailor it still further: reshaping it, rotating it, and sheering it. If you're looking for a graphics program to get started with get this.

Price: £99.95
Manufacturer: Serif
Contact: (0800) 924 925
Score: 9

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University of Westminster, which combined taking photos with digital imaging and manipulation. It wasn't until my final year that I started doing full-colour digital work, scanning in images and working on them in Photoshop and Quark Xpress."

What sort of things do you do to pictures?

"Everything you work on is different, so you use different techniques depending on what you're trying to achieve. When I first started I didn't know the software so it was all trial and error. Now that I know the programs I can work out what I want to do before I start. Sometimes you get the best results by accident, though."

What about the ethics of manipulation and tabloid "fiction photos"?

"I use computers simply as a tool to enhance my images or bring them out of my mind into reality when it can't be done wholly photographically. Tabloids use journalism as badly as they use imaging."

Are manipulated photos becoming more widespread?

"Definitely. I do a lot of work for the club mag Muzik. The photos I take in clubs go in "straight", but portrait shots of bands and DJs tend to be manipulated as it's currently very trendy. Style mags are going with a lot of photos manipulated using very blatant and powerful computer visual effects. I like to keep a traditional photographic feel, using the software in more subtle ways."

How does photography benefit from computer imaging?

"It removes the boundaries. Any image can be created. People who say that it's too pixel-based to be an artform are wrong; you still have to have the idea in the first place.

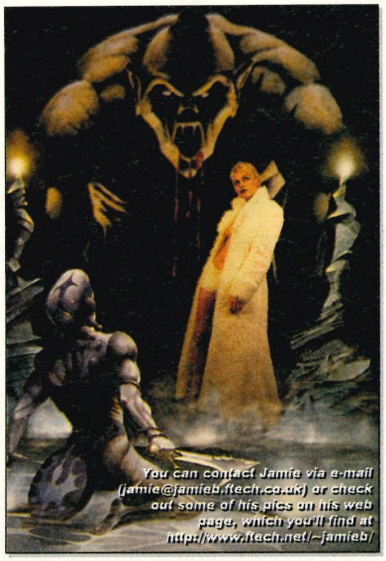
HOW DID HE DO THAT?

Some of the more heavily manipulated design images show a range of Jamie B's work. Here's how he produced those effects

The club shot used on the opening page of this feature was shot on Fujichrome Velvia in a night club in Mallorca using a 1 second exposure and no flash. The transparency was then written to CD and image enhancement began, courtesy of Photoshop v3.0. First off, an Unsharp Mask obliterated dust scratches and Despeckle filters were used several times over to sharpn things up. Next, selected areas of the laser beams were "feathered" for maximum colour and the contrast upped to make the dancer's silhouette more prominent. The whole image was slightly gaussian blurred to prevent pixelation effects from filters. The final touches were Whole Image Enhancement using "curves" (this gives absolute colour control) and additional colour balance adjustments.

The fashion shoot

The photo was shot in a studio and the transparency shot to CD. The image was then enhanced in Photoshop v3.0. Foreground and background images were then scanned in and also copied to CD, and images placed in layers at low res to structure and balance the components of the final montage. Each individual component was then enhanced using the same techniques as the club shot. Next, the background and foreground images were placed together in different layers and merged using paint tools. After cutting out the model using a pen tool, she was re-sized in another layer (you need lots of RAM to use three or four layers effectively in Photoshop), and then a Lighting Effects Filter was used on the model to blend the lighting as much as possible. Paint tools and Rubber Stamp Smudge added smoke effects over the model's legs and disguised the edges of all the parts of the montage.



▲ ***Jamie B's final montage.***

And the Rest...

Along with paint programs, photo-retouching packages and drawing programs, there's a third class of graphics package. Utilities are typically small programs that work either inside or alongside another application, adding extra features to it. Then, of course, there are photo libraries on compact disc and clipart collections, a selection of which will be vital to anyone with serious artist inclinations. Here we've listed just a few of the many utilities and clipart discs available. Check out the Get Serious pages of PC Review each month for in depth reviews of others, and of course bigger applications — see Painter 4 reviewed on page 114 this issue, for example.





Kai's Power Tools 3

They're called Power Tools, but for anyone into PC graphics this collection of plug-ins for Photoshop is more like a collection of exciting toys (PowerToys anyone?). There are texture and sphere creators, effects to add page curls, perspective generation tools and more. Facilities are accessed from a stylish user interface, which, once you've mastered it, feels very natural to work with and also allows you to experiment and try out ideas very quickly. If you've got PhotoShop or a program that's 100 percent compatible with Photoshop plug-ins this is highly recommended. of

Price: £129
Manufacturer: Meta Tools
Contact: (01706) 831 831
Score: 8



MSC Convolver

From the same guys that developed Power Tools comes Convolver. Once again it's a plug in for Photoshop but this time the utilities are designed to correct rather than distort or manipulate, ie you get tools to enhance the brightness, change the colour balance and contrast. As such it's a utility for photo manipulators rather than artists — it's not as useful or as flexible as PowerTools but anyone creating compositions from photos will probably find a use for it, as will those applying lighting effects (photographs etc). Unlike PowerTools, it runs under Windows 3 not just Windows 95.

Price: £129
Manufacturer: Meta Tools
Contact: (01706) 831 831
Score: 8



GST Photo Collection

So you've read our feature, loaded PaintShop Pro off the cover CD and had a go at creating a your own masterpiece. The only problem is that you have the artistic talent of a handcuffed monkey and your masterpiece looks like a Jackson Pollack instead of a Dali. What to do? Well worry not, there's a simple and very effective trick: take existing pictures, modify them and claim you've created them! This is exactly what clipart libraries are for. GST is currently offering an oh-so-good deal of 100 royality free pictures for £2.95, or eight CDs each containing 100 pictures for £8.

Price: £2.95
Manufacturer: GTS
Contact: (01480) 496 575
Score: 7

Be a Paint Shop pro...

Creating great artwork doesn't require major talent or involve serious money. Using a top shareware program like Paint Shop Pro won't cost you a kidney and certainly doesn't require you to pass a university entrance exam to get stunning output. Yet it has most of the 24-bit painting options you'd ever need to quickly produce first-rate computer artwork. Freely available to test, or a give-away £49.95 to register, PSP is a combination drawing and image manipulation package; you can create new work on it, or just use it to touch up scanned or rendered images in a wide variety of file formats.

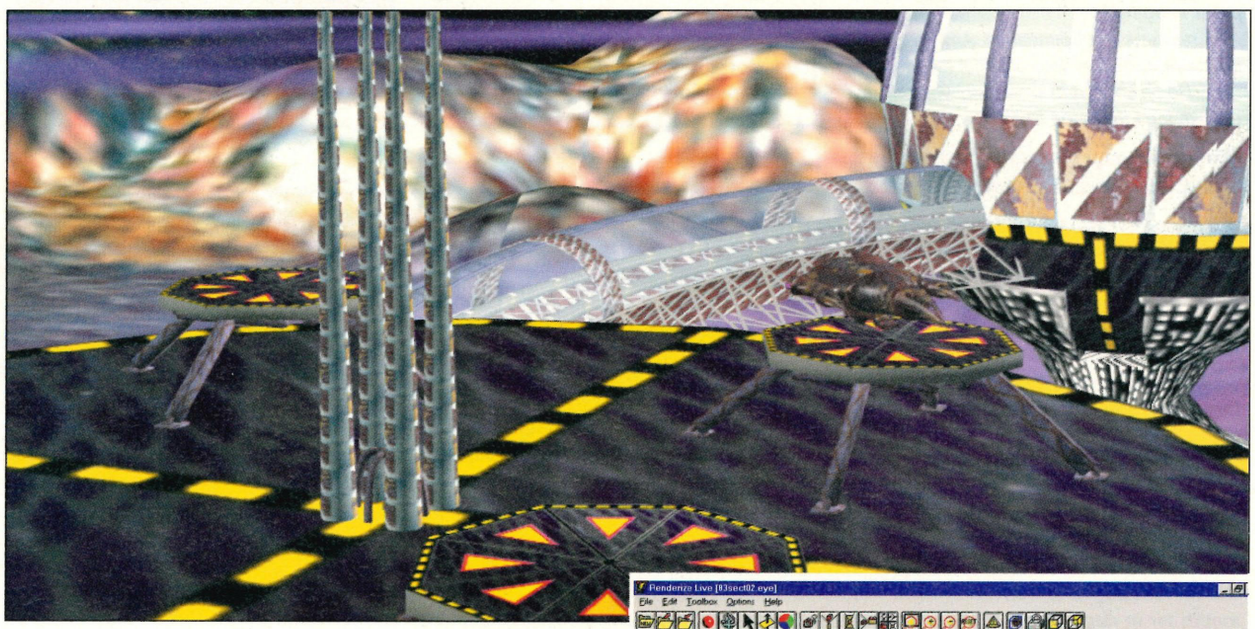
This month we're doing both in a quick tutorial which gives you the kind of drop-dead drop-shadow effect much loved by "happening" magazines and cool Web pages. A point to note is that the kind of filter we're using at the heart of this month's effect only works with images with more than 256 colours, or 256 colour greyscale images. So bear that in mind when you create a workscreen from the File/New menu option. This tutorial also sees the start of a new tutorial series, which continues next month.

PC Review
In-depth coverage

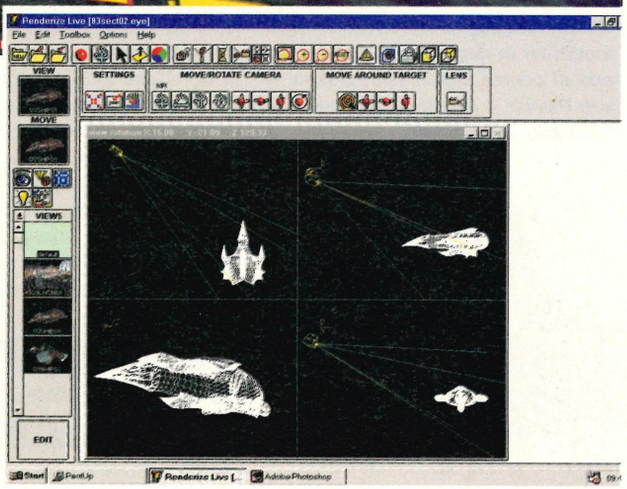
The finished screen. Great for your own letterheads, Web pages or as a logo to maybe resize and incorporate into images.

The very two-dimensional Peter Lee shows you how to produce 2D artwork with the minimum of fuss...

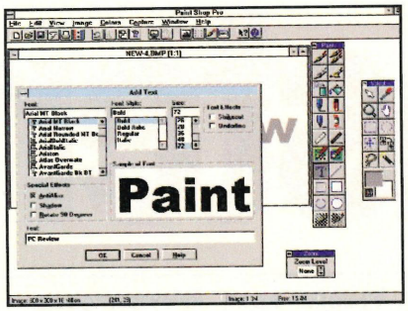
Render Benders



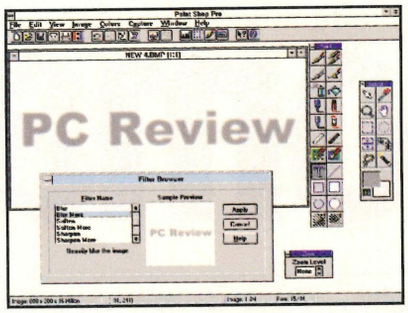
When you see the film Jumanji you'll see what's possible with 3D rendering software. Now it's your turn.



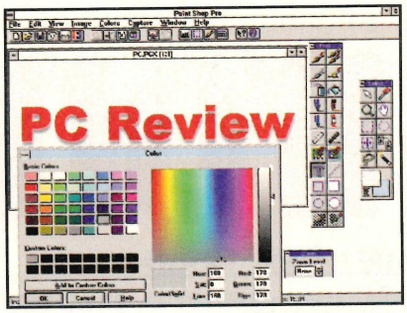
***1 CREATE YOUR OBJECTS:** A rendered scene consists of a number of objects, including lights, a camera, a background — and of course, the object of interest. It's worth spending time here as a realistic final render depends on the quality of the objects. Start by modelling the object out of primitives or facets using various tools for stretching and duplicating shapes. Some objects, for example planes and car bodies, can be defined in key cross-sections. Others can be made by sticking together other objects. Sometimes you can find suitable objects in the library included with your rendering package. The next stage is to give the objects a realistic appearance. The key is a good brush map. Create a material with the right degree of transparency and reflection.*



1 *Paint Shop Pro, being a Windows thoroughbred, allows you to use Truetype or Adobe fonts. To place text into your image, click on the Text tool (shown depressed on the long toolbar) and this comprehensive requester opens up. You get a preview of the typeface, and after choosing a style and size, you can type in new text. Click on Antialias to activate the feature, which smoothes any jagged edges around the individual letters. The text uses your foreground colour, and initially you should set this to a mid-grey that we can use to build on next...*

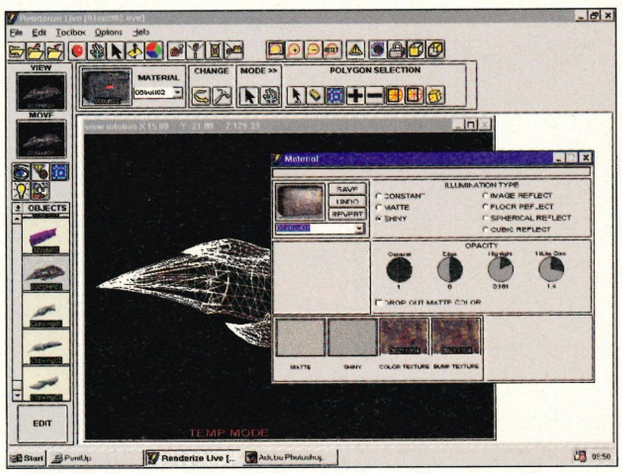


2 *The text has been positioned on screen, and to get the subtle shadow effect you have to use the same filter three times in succession. To do this, use the rectangular selection tool to select the text image, and from the Filter browser menu choose Blur More. Apply this twice more to emphasise the effect and get a good fall off of grey to white. Each time we use the filter it blurs the image, so doing it three times in a row as we do here effectively multiplies the amount of blurring being performed. Now to add the forground message with a dash of colour.*

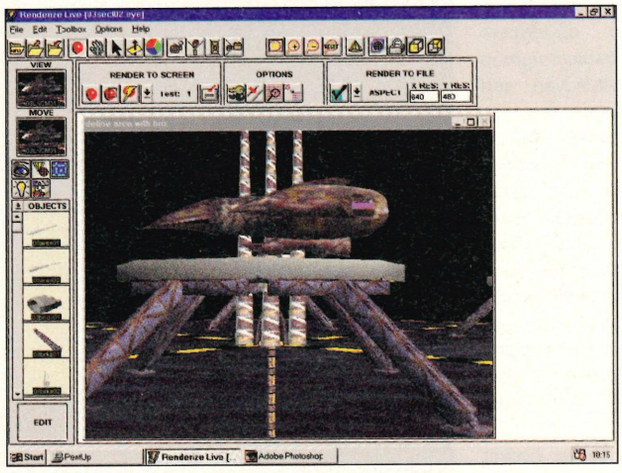


3 *Seen here is the colour palette requester, reached with a double-click on the foreground colour icon in the small toolbar. Select red as the foreground colour. Call up the text requester again; Paint Shop Pro remembers the previous text and styles, so click on OK, and now position your text to the left and above the blurred original. You can place the coloured text anywhere you like really, the offset governing the apparent direction of the light which is casting the shadow. Lastly, apply different filters to new text before positioning on the shadow.*

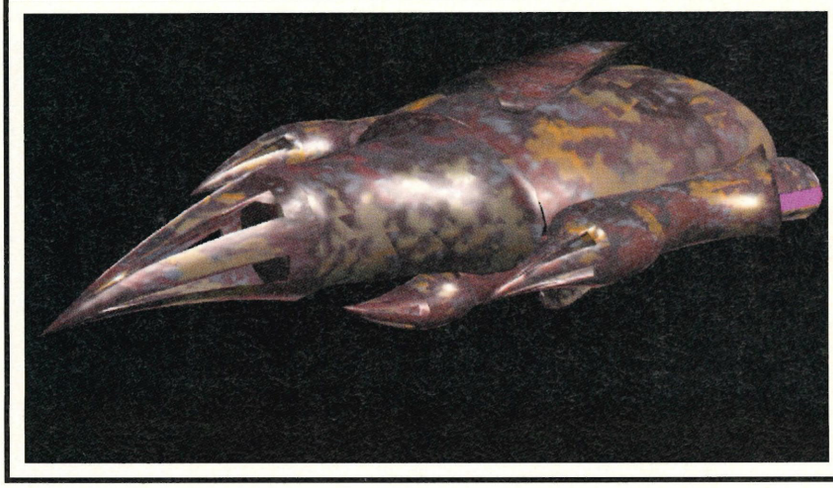
Paint Shop Pro is Shareware — you can try before you buy. In fact we've got the latest version on this month's cover CD. Suppliers JASC Inc are c/o Digital Workshop, First Floor, 8 West Bar, Banbury OX16 9RR. Registered version costs £49.95. The version used here is 3.11, which boasts a fab addition for Web page designers — GIF format images can be saved with a transparent background colour, getting rid of the clumsy white areas often found on sites around the world.



2 ***CREATE THE BACKDROP:*** *The detail required in the background changes from image to image, and also depends on whether you are creating an animation or a still. Sometimes you will need to use lots of other 3D objects, scattered around on a large plane: this can be especially true for detailed animations when you need objects to pass behind one another, or when you are moving the camera. A good trick when creating animations is to render the backdrop properly once, and then import the image as a backdrop in subsequent renderings. This will save you a great deal of time and memory.*



3 ***POSITION THE OBJECTS IN THE SCENE:*** *This stage is where you need the skills of a movie director and top-class cameraman. Plonking your objects into the scene without much thought will provide a dull image, no matter how well defined your objects are. Watch television and look at photographs in magazines to learn how to compose your image. Don't be afraid to make objects pass close to the camera: think how boring bad family photographs are with a complete head-to-toe pose. Zoom in and make the most of your models. Lighting is crucial. Position a key-light to illuminate the scene, and one or two less bright sources for "fill in".*



4 ***THE FINAL IMAGE:*** *This is the final stage, and the one which should only take the most time if you are rending multiple frames for an animation. Try and get the image resolution right to start with, as this will save time. If you are rendering for video tape, don't go overboard on pin-sharp detail as video simply can't show it. If you are going to play back your animation using a MJPEG board, a resolultion of 352 x282 is good enough. If the image is to appear in print, you will need a higher resolution: about 1024x1024 if possible. You may need higher resolution textures to suit. Shadows are nice but they double the rendering time and in most cases you don't need them: this is especially true in animations when they are only displayed for 1/25th of a second.*

COVERDISC

CD version only

Chronomaster

US Gold • (0121 606 1800)

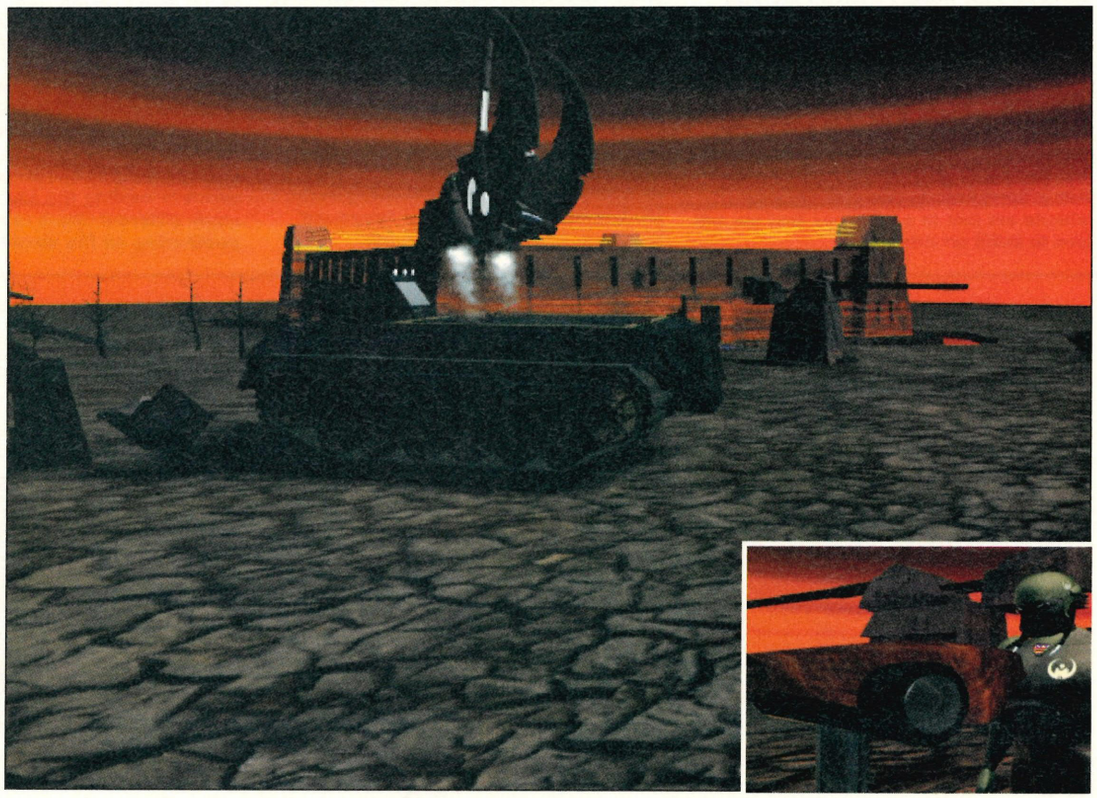
As adventure game plots go, Chronomaster has an impressive pedigree — stand by to be taken into the future...

To run: Use the install icon in the PC Review main menu to install to your hard drive. Now quit to DOS and change to the CHRONO directory. Now type setup and enter to configure game. Once finished, type CMASTER to run.

New from US Gold, Chronomaster is a masterpiece of adventure gaming as our review on page 72 will tell you. The game has an excellent plot, written by the late Nebula and Hugo award winner Roger Zelazny, and is beautifully animated by in-house developers Capstone — part of the Intracorp group which brought us Witchaven and TekWar (reviewed last issue).

This point and click adventure is set in a future where it is possible for specialist designers to create man made worlds. These pocket worlds (as they're called) can be designed to your exact specification, from the landscaping and climate (so if you really do want twiddly bits around the edge of Norway, you can have them) right down to changing the laws of physics so that they suit your own particular needs. Talk about designer labels!

You control Korda, a former pocket world designer who has been dragged from comfortable retirement to investigate the mysterious "closing down" of two pocket worlds. He's not exactly thrilled to be on the case, but the large cash bonus he'll receive provides him with an incentive. To earn his dosh he has to travel to the worlds and set up tracking equipment to locate the keys which will get them back on line.



▲ ***Tanks for the memory! Chronomaster gives you the chance to travel to bleak new worlds and seek out crumbling civilisations.***

▲ ***Korda needs to keep his guard up — so steal a guard's uniform!***

In this demo, you will travel to a pocket world to locate these keys. Of course, things are never simple and there are several puzzles to solve before you will be able to proceed with your task.

The demo is taken directly from the game and allows you to experience the richly detailed graphics and superb rendered cut scenes, all of which combine together with an excellent plot to make Chronomaster one of the best adventure games of the year.

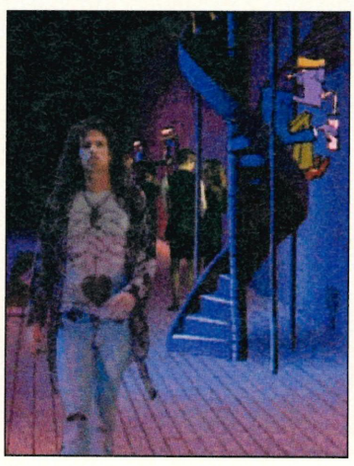
System requirements: 486DX, 8Mb RAM with at least 580K base memory, SoundBlaster or compatible sound card and mouse.

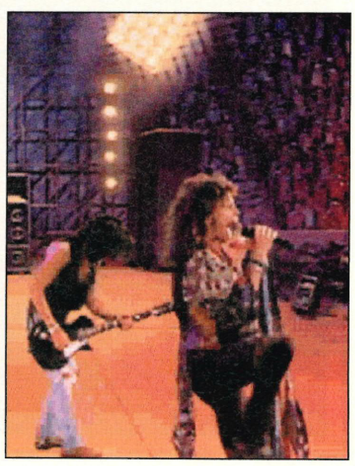
Please note that this game also requires a VESA driver.

PCR TV

Welcome to a brand new section on the PC Review CD-ROM which we've innovatively called PCR TV. Every month we'll be featuring the very hottest in Multimedia and Full Motion Video. This means we will include actual CD ROM films, music videos, FMV based games and even educational videos — thus allowing you to get a full preview and a feel for how high the quality is of the sound and vision of any particular new title when running on *your* system.

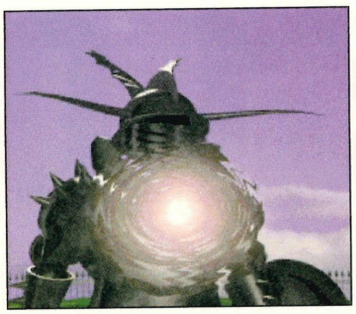
System requirements: 486DX, 8Mb memory, 1Mb video card able to run at 256 colours in SVGA.





Here are our rock 'n' roll heroes in all their Full Motion Video glory! In their Quest for Fame game, are they actually looking better after kicking a lot of (nasty) habits, or is it the magic of the camera? Whatever it is, it's still rock and roll to me... ▶

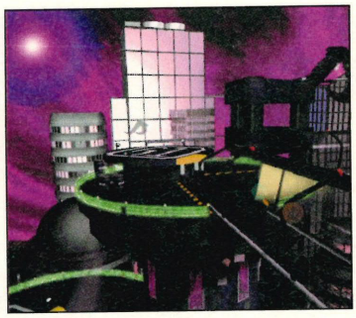
The coverdisk hotline is (01451) 810788, open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm



▲ **The statue in the park holds many clues. Try talking to it.**



▲ **But don't speak to strangers — especially not ones with guns.**



▲ **Pretty, innit? The sky around Urbs is a fetching purple shade.**



▲ **Watch out for strange ships bearing lasers.**



▲ **Korda looks a wee bit overdressed for the desert, but fortunately he's protected from the heat by his handy time bubble.**



▲ **Our smartly dressed hero takes a stroll in the park, but it isn't for recreation. You'll find plenty more than grass and fresh air here.**



▲ **Ooh my aching head! OK, so Korda's putting his helmet on rather than massaging his throbbing temples, but if he doesn't wear his armour he may end up with a pain in the bonce courtesy of a bullet.**

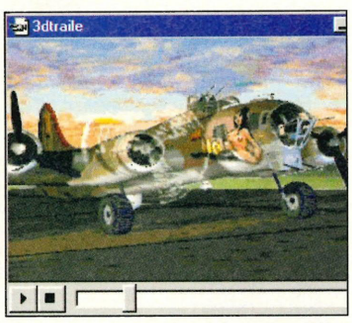


▲ **When Korda's in his time bubble, everything and everyone he meets is kept in suspended animation until he touches them. So if you're not sure what's going on, keep your hands to yourself.**

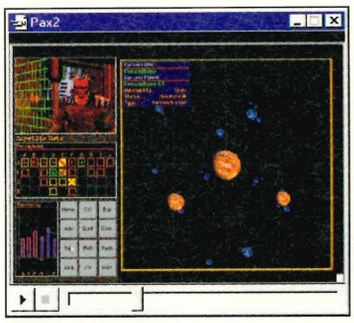
Installation instructions

1) First install the game from the PC Review Main Menu.
2) Make sure that you select the Chronomaster 3Mb demo to install from the change install game menu.
3) After it has finished installing, QUIT out of windows and into DOS
4) Windows '95 users should press F8 when the computer reboots and then select the DOS option (number 4).
5) Now change to the directory that contains Chronomaster. If you used the default setting then this will be CAPSTONE/CHRONO
6) Now simply type CMASTER <return>.

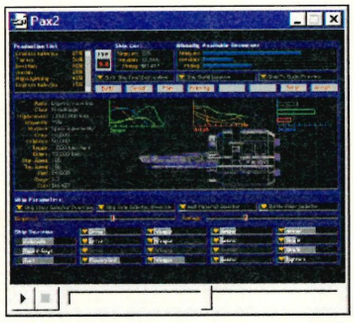
If you have any further problems loading, please phone the PC Review helpline on (01451) 810788. Please note the operating times of the Helpline are Monday — Friday from 9.00am — 5.00pm



▲ **Here's just the beginning of the Bermuda Syndrome video opening sequence just showing the stunning quality of the visuals!**



▲ **Blizzard's next game, Imperia 2 they've gone all out to give a game with real depth, strategy and action. All of this though will combine with these finely detailed video sequences.**



▲ **Imperia 2's attention to detail is excellent. Rendered video sequences, full use of audio and the use of strategy all adds up to make an atmospheric epic!!**

To load PCR TV

To use PCR TV, you will have to have a PC system that has a minimum configuration of the following;
486DX, 8Mb memory, 1MB video card
You will also need to have Quicktime and Video for Windows which can both be installed onto your system from the PC Review CD-ROM. To install the two drivers, simply insert the PC Review CD into your drive. If you have Windows '95 just click on INSTALL and follow the on-screen instructions regarding installing the Video Drivers. If you have earlier versions of Windows, insert the CD as above and run SETUP. Next just follow the on-screen instructions and click on INSTALL and follow the on-screen commands as with Win '95.

COVERDISC

CD version only

ClarisWorks 1.0

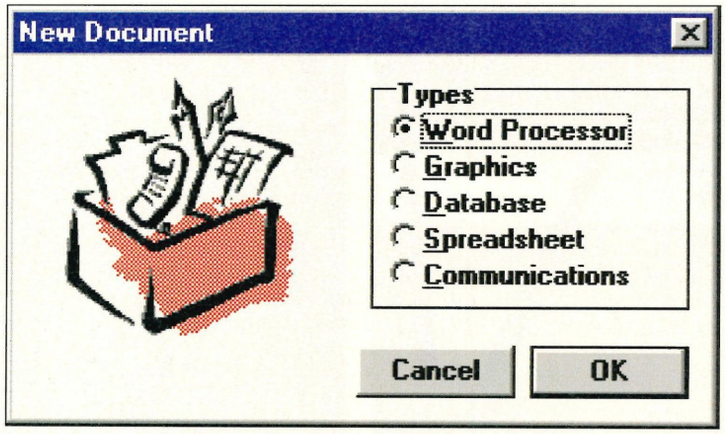
Claris • (01923) 208444

A whole office in a single package, worth £155, and we're giving it away free? Are we mad?

To install, choose the Utilities menu and click on ClarisWorks V1

Yes, you heard right, this is a full, unexpurgated copy of ClarisWorks, a suite of programs that includes a wordprocessor, graphics program, database, spreadsheet *and* access to communications software! And you thought Christmas was months away...

The package features detailed on-line help to make it easier for you to get the results that you want, but just to get you started here's a basic introduction to each of the applications. You can access the application you want by launching the suite from the ClarisWorks program group in Windows 3.1 or from the Start menu in Win95, and then selecting from Wordprocessor, Graphics, Database or Spreadsheet in the box that appears.



▲ *ClarisWorks can easily create any kind of document, from a letter to a relative to a corporate report including spreadsheets it does it all.*

Playing with words

The wordprocessor provides you with a number of tools for arranging and formatting text. You can use it as a standalone application and enter text by hand, or import text from another application. If you wish to import text, then select the Insert option from the File menu, and select the type of file you want to load: ClarisWorks will accept documents in Word for Windows or DOS text formats, among others.

However, it's not just plain old text that you can include in your work: in addition, you can place graphical objects into a document. If you want to include something like a box, line or circle, then you can actually use the same tools as are included with the drawing program: to access these, simply choose the Show Tools option in the Window menu — see the Graphics section below to find out what the tools are and how to use them. To include a bitmap picture, simply follow the same procedure as for importing a text file: use the Insert option from the file file menu.

Hidden away in the Edit menu are facilities for checking the spelling of your document, and also a thesaurus so you can enrich your writing with the inclusion of synonyms and euphemisms.

Pretty as a picture

So you fancy yourself an artist then? Well you're in luck because ClarisWorks can cater for your aesthetic urges too, with this handy little drawing package. First of all you have to make sure you understand about objects and layers — if you're having trouble then just refer to the handy cut-out-and-ignore boxout conveniently located elsewhere on this page...

The icons located to the left of the screen are all fairly self-explanatory: refer to the annotation for a list of the buttons and their functions. Below these icons you'll find a set of controls that allow you to change the colour and fill style of your objects, lines and such. At the bottom left of the screen you will find a row of icons that allow you to adjust the zoom level of your picture.

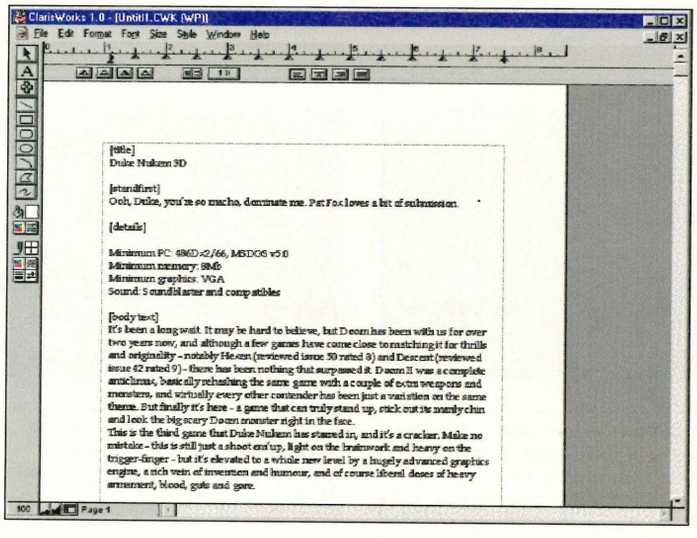
Data basics

Are you drowning in a sea of disordered data, unable to see the wood for the trees? What you need is to take control of all that info with a database, and where better than the one that comes supplied with ClarisWorks? The first thing to do is to define your fields: these are the groups into which your information is to be sorted — in this example we're knocking up an address book, so the fields are things like Name, Address, Telephone number and so forth. Each field needs a format, such as text, number, date or whatever.

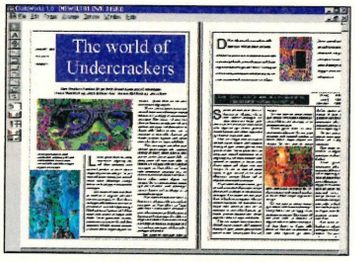
Once you've defined the fields, you can customise the look of your database by selecting the Layout option

Objects and layers

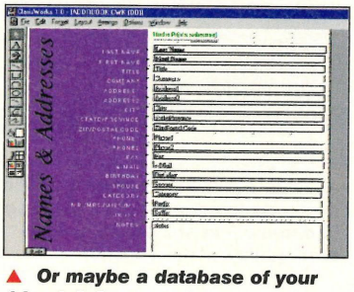
One concept you need to grasp if you're going to understand how all these applications work is how to use objects and layers. To put it simply (hopefully), an object can be anything — a piece of text, a graphic, a row of cells from the spreadsheet — and it can be moved around independently of other objects. Each object occupies a layer of its own, meaning that objects on "later" layers will obscure objects on "earlier" ones: you might think of it like a series of cut-outs laid one on top of the other. If you wish to order the layers differently, you can use the facilities in the Arrange menu.



Some objects, busy occupying layers. Notice how different objects overlap each other. ▶



▲ ***Want to create a complex DTP style layout? No problem!***



▲ ***Or maybe a database of your friends? Once again, no problem.***

from the Layout menu — it works much like the graphics utility described elsewhere. You can add colour, put boxes around things and so forth just to make it look a bit more interesting.

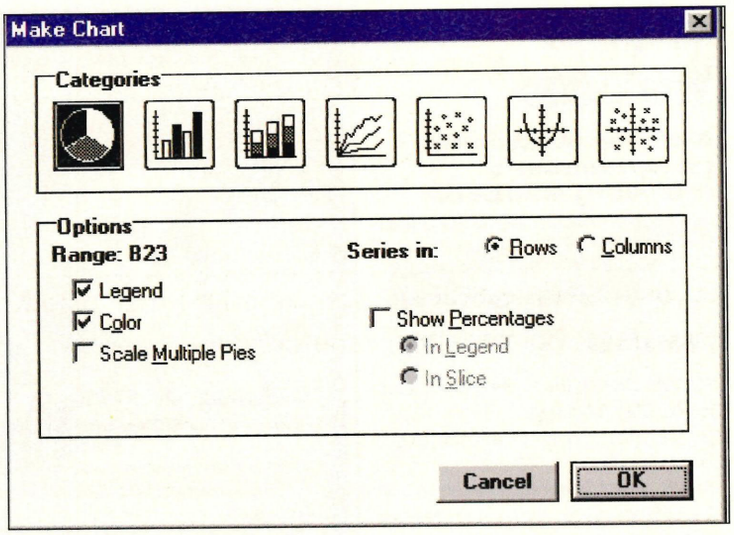
Once all this is done, you can start entering the data. Simply use the Layout menu to switch into Browse mode, then choose New Record in the Edit menu to create a new entry. Repeat 'til fade. Once the data is entered, you can use the roladex icon in the top left of the screen to sort through your data.

Nice figures

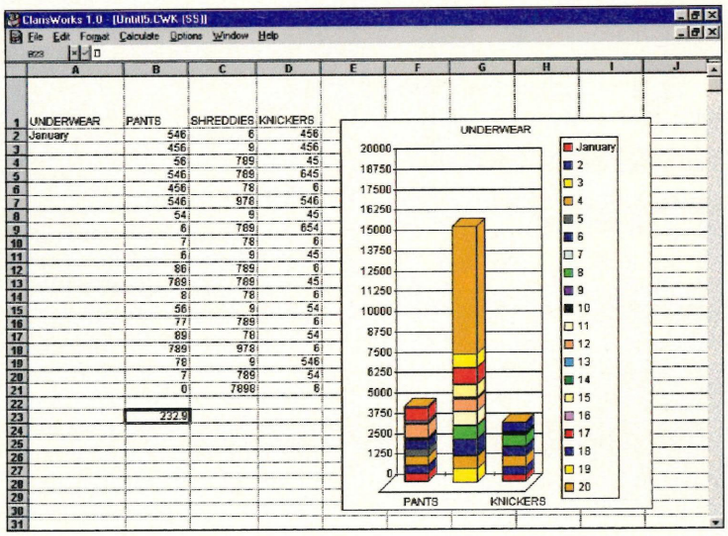
If you're having trouble keeping track of those pesky numbers and such, then it's time to let a spreadsheet take the strain. The basic idea of a spreadsheet is that numbers are arranged in (horizontal) rows and (vertical) columns. For example, you might have a spreadsheet that details your expenditure on food in one column, on clothes in the next column and so forth, with the rows representing the dates on which the expenditure was made.

You can insert labels into columns to help you keep track of what's going on, and even add graphic and text elements to liven it up a bit: either use the Insert function in the File menu, or the Show Tools command in the View menu (as described elsewhere). Each cell (meaning each square on the spreadsheet) can also contain a function, such as the addition of a number of other cells, or the average, or whatever — access this through the Paste Function option in the Edit menu.

Once you've entered your data, you can make it look a bit more interesting by turning it into a chart or graph — use the Make Chart function in the Options menu to bring up a list of all the sorts of charts and graphs you can choose from. There are all sorts, from pie charts and line graphs, to 3D bar charts and so forth. As you'd expect you can then paste the graph into the word processor module to documents such as club membership reports, or even a letter to the bank manager showing what interest rates are available from other banks!

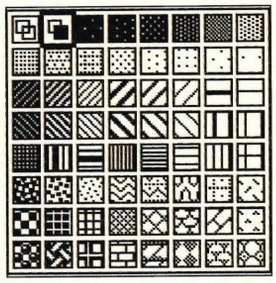


▲ ***Impress your bank manager with a nice graph showing your 'fiscal' income and maybe he'll let you have a loan for a new Pentium 166 PC!***



▲ ***Need to calculate interest repayments, or share prices? ClarisWorks' powerful spreadsheet is ready, willing and able.***





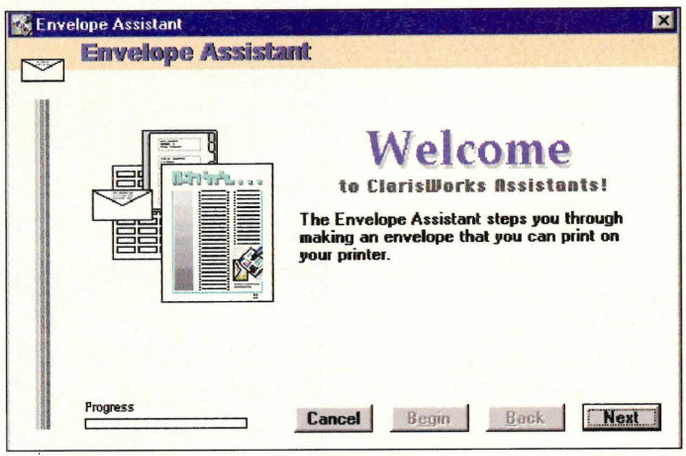
◄ ***Red, and yellow and pink and blue. The colours of the world are yours when filling drawing objects or graphs.***

ICONOGRAPHY

Select	Circle
Text	Curved Line
Add Spreadsheet	Shape
Line	Irregular Line
Box	Tab editing.
Rounded Box	Justification.

Here are the main icons in the tool bar and their functions. All the major parts of the program can be accessed from this tool panel so it's well worth learning.

What next?



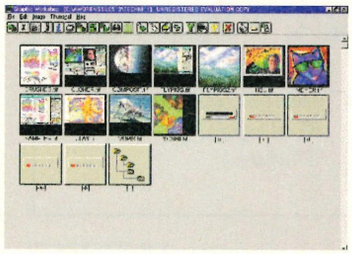
There's no way we could ever fit a description of all the features that ClarisWorks provides into a couple of pages — or even several dozen — this was simply intended as a brief introduction to the simplest facilities. If you want to learn more then you should consult the online help that is provided with the package, via the Help menu. Also, to save you time, there is a wide variety of pre-designed templates supplied with the package (in the ClarisWorks directory under Templates) which you can adapt to suit your needs.

If you decide that you like ClarisWorks version 1.0 then you'll love its latest incarnation, version 3, which you can put to the test for a limited period by selecting ClarisWorks v3 (demo) from the utilities section of this month's cover CD. It not only updates all of the original applications, adding lots of extra features and flexibility, but also includes a completely new paint program, and interactive templates to make creating certain documents even quicker — and all for a quite shockingly low price.

You can find out more by contacting Claris on (01923) 208444

Graphics Workshop

Alchemy Mindworks Inc. (Canada) • (001905) 9369502



To run: select Graphics Workshop from the Utilities menu, then once installed, run the program from the Graphics Workshop Program Group or Win95 Start menu.

Graphics Workshop aims to make it easier for you to preview the contents of a directory without having to load each picture individually.

When you first run the program, you'll be presented with a series of buttons and some menus. The buttons with the weird green symbol on them represent pictures — if you want to preview that picture, simply select it with the mouse, then choose Add Thumbnails from the Thumbnail menu to create a postage-stamp sized reproduction. If you want to preview more than one picture, then use the Ctrl or Shift buttons with the mouse to select those files that you want to see. There are also a series of buttons that represent all your disks and directories.

In addition, it is possible to load a picture — in any one of nearly 50 formats, including Corel Draw! files, Quicktime movies and PhotoCD images — and use some of the included filters on it, from rotations, colour alterations and cutting and pasting.

Requires: 486DX33, 4Mb RAM, Windows 3.1 or Windows '95

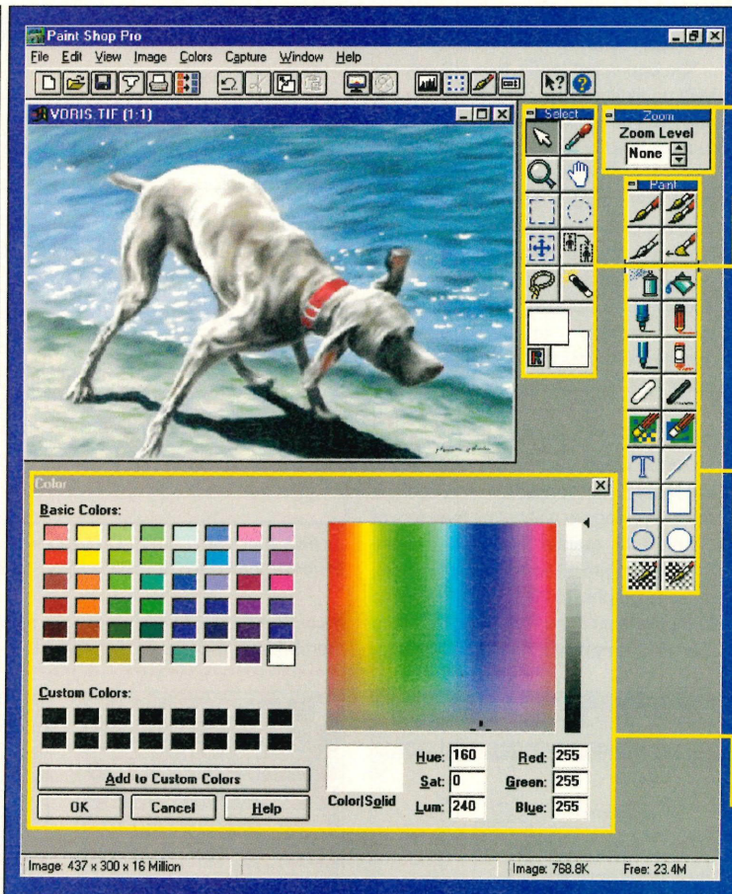
WinZip

Targetfour Ltd • (01734) 772877

To run: select WinZip from the Utilities directory on the CD, then run Winzip from the Winzip program group or from the Start menu in Win95.

WinZip is a ridiculously easy-to-use Windows application that handles all your archiving needs. Just select the zip file that you want to look at, and it'll instantly show you all the file's contents, which can be extracted individually or en masse. If you want to create a new archive file, then just click on the New icon, and follow the instructions. If you're going to use this program for more than a month, please register.

Requires: 486 DX33, 4Mb RAM, Windows 3.1 or Win95.



Control Toolbox
This will change according to which tool you are using: usually it controls the zoom factor, or the size and shape of a brush.

Select Toolbox
This box houses tools for manipulating the image. There is a variety of ways to grab areas of the picture for pasting elsewhere, as well as a zoom tool and a colour picker, which allows you to choose colours from within the picture itself. At the bottom are two boxes used to specify foreground and background colours: double clicking on these will bring up the Colour window (see below).

Paint Toolbox
All the action is here — from line and box drawing, fills and text, to a variety of 'real world' tools like paintbrush, felt-tip and chalk. At the bottom are tools that allow you to smooth or sharpen areas of your picture by hand, which can produce some stunning results.

Colour Window
Pick and mix your colours here. You can mix them by hand using RGB or HSL values, or pick them from the handy chart.

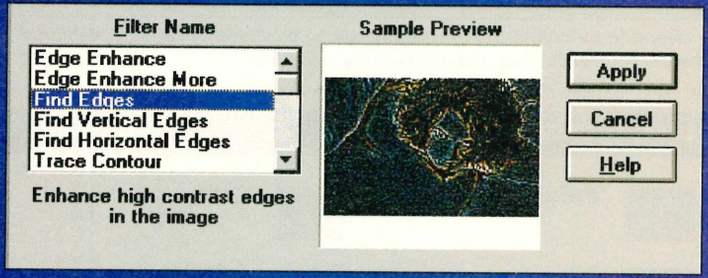
PaintShop Pro v3.11

Digital Workshop • (01295) 258335

To run: select PaintShop Pro from the utilities menu of the new CD ROM. Once installed, launch from the PaintShop Pro program group or the Windows 95 Start menu.

It has to be about the most useful graphics utility known to man, and it's yours for nowt.

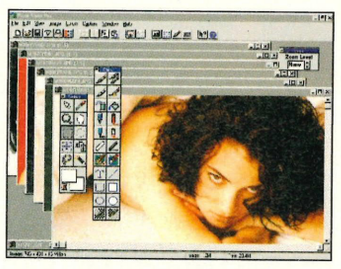
If you ever need to do anything involving graphics files on the PC then you cannot live without this preposterously useful utility from JASC. This one program can convert your graphics files from just about any format you care to mention into just about any other format you can think of and, in the meantime, change its size, fiddle with its colours, chop bits off or add bits on, draw squiggles everywhere and much more that we can't even begin to go into here. If you're looking for an introduction in to the world of computer graphics this definitely worth a look. Above is a quick introduction to getting started but as ever there's online help if you need it. Alternatively, you could do a lot worse than read our hint-filled tutorial on PSP in this months feature. This tutorial is also the first instalment of a new regular series on graphics using PaintShop Pro.



▲ *There are more handy filters and effects than you could ever use hidden away in the Image menu. Go on, have a play...*

You pays your money...

Of course, there's no such thing as a free lunch these days, and with all this power there is a price: this is a shareware product, so if you intend to be using it for more than a month then you should be prepared to pay for it. Registration details are provided within the program, in the Help menu under Purchasing — it's the right thing to do, and you'll feel better.



▲ *Winona, Winona. Marry me.*

FIRESTORM
THUNDERHAWK 2









LOCATE, INTERCEPT & DESTROY

CORE DESIGN LIMITED

PC CD-ROM, SEGA SATURN & SONY PLAYSTATION

CORE DESIGN LIMITED 55 ASHBOURNE ROAD DERBY DE22 3FS TEL: 01332 297797 FAX: 01332 381511

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You Don't Know Jack

Focus Multi Media
(01889) 583571

Install by selecting from the PC Review main menu and following the on-screen commands.

Test your general knowledge in this wacky, multi-media trivia quiz. This is a swish, beautifully presented offering with great graphics, excellent sound and a continuous narration in US game show host style. Your host is very irreverent and continuously attacks the contestants with his verbal wit.

You Don't Know Jack requires 486 33Mhz, SVGA and 8Mb and will run in Windows 3.1 or greater.

Dogz

P.F. Magic
pfmagic.com/dogz/adopt

Install by selecting from the PC Review main menu and following the on-screen commands.

Dogz is a weird and wonderful program whereby you adopt a dog which will then live in your computer. You can train, pet, feed and even train the dogz from puppy to fully grown pet. This program allows you to look at several puppies and play ball with them prior to adopting them via the P.F. contact address given in the program. Woof!

Dogz require lots of petting and Windows, 486DX, 50Mhz, VGA min; 4 MB and Windows compatible sound card.

Bermuda Syndrome

BMG
(0171) 973 0011

Install by selecting from the PC Review main menu and following the on-screen commands.

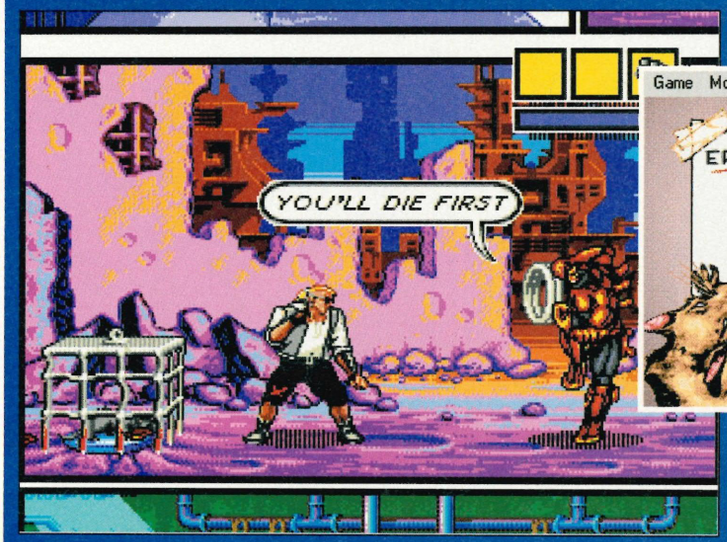
Here's the opportunity to try out Bermuda Syndrome, solve a few puzzles and experience first hand the absolutely amazing quality of the graphics — probably the best graphics currently available running under Windows. Don't take our word for it, just install it now and see for yourself. Excellent!

Bermuda Syndrome requires 486DX, SVGA 640x480 res, 8Mb and Sound Blaster compatible sound card.



Comix Zone

Sega Enterprises (0181) 995 3399



◀ *Nothing should become between a man and his rat.*



▲ *Here's the comic episode that you'll be appearing in.*

To play the game, you must have Windows '95 on your system. Simply run Comix Zone from the main PC Review menu and follow any on-screen instructions.

Comix Zone is Sega's first foray into the world of PC games. Originally developed by Sega of America for the Mega Drive, this is an excellent PC conversion giving the game all of the true traditions of its arcade heritage.

Essentially a platform game, in Comix Zone you become Sketch Turner the reluctant hero of the strip. Mortus is drawing horrendous creatures to battle Sketch in every panel of the strip. If Mortus destroys Sketch, that megalomaniac Mutant will become real and Earth will be doomed to his rule forever!

But there is hope. Now that he's a comic book superhero, Sketch can kick some serious butt. Instantly, Sketch can fight like a one-man mercenary platoon!

Plus! Sketch's pet rat Roadkill has morphed into a killer attack rodent. Sketch can set him on the Mortus Mutants and know there will always be shocking developments.

Meanwhile back at base, Alissa Cyan is backing Sketch with constant situation reports and battle advice.This demo version of the game only has one page of action, but you have full control.

In the full version each Episode is two comic-book pages long, packed with many panels of action. Each panel contains a peril, puzzle or obstacle that Sketch must master.

Can Sketch make it to the end of the book? Can he defeat Mortus and come back to the real world? The future is in your hands. . . .the hero of a comic strip.

You can configure controls from the main menu which you should do quickly and play. Comix Zone is an excellent action game in the full tradition of Sega.

Comix Zone requires, Windows 3.1 or Windows 95, Pentium processor, 8Mb, SVGA: 640x480x256 colours, double-speed CD-ROM, Sound Blaster 16 or compatible.



▲ *Here's a bit of a puzzler. Now just how do I get round this? Perhaps if I ...*



▲ *Even two dimensional comic characters know how to box clever...*



▲ *Hey presto! Okay so it was simple, but puzzles do get harder than a rat with rigor mortis.*

Ice and Fire

GT Interactive (0171) 258 3791

Ice and Fire will install itself from the PC Review main menu. You need to be running a version of Windows.

IAn attack by an alien race forces the commander of Asteroid IF-1 to freeze everything on the asteroid — humans aliens, secrets! And now of course, you have been selected as the frozen survivors only hope...

In Ice & Fire you are able to decide the course of action — fast paced shoot 'em up or a more methodical game of exploration and elimination. The game consists of two parts. In the first part, the fly-through, you can explore the mystical terrain of the asteroid. This has been shortened for the demo, but should give you the idea.

You are in search of eight unique space stations. In the demo you will encounter the third maze — the Power Station – and equipped only with your Ice & Fire blasters, you must uncover what lies within the icy crystals! Full on-screen instructions are included.

Requires 486DX, SVGA, 8Mb, x2 CD drive and Soundblaster compatibles.

access all areas world tour '96



life was dull a few days ago. couldn't wait for a holiday, couldn't afford one either. but now i'm not tied to a continent let alone a country, i never know what's going to happen next. news from japan? easy. chat to a friend in canada (at local UK rates!)? no problem. exchange ideas with a professor in kenya? brush up on my snowboard technique? check out a concert in new york? now these are the kinds of achievements that make a life and i haven't paid import duty, taxi fares or even hotel bar bills. now excuse me i have to join some friends for a movie preview in moscow.

the world waits for no-one but that's no problem. access all areas makes it easy to join, and even easier to use the internet. in fact 'easy' is a word the big room takes very seriously. using access all areas is like having a net expert sitting right along side and if you want to get into the techi info then it's all there to analyse - sad but true.

- THREE SIMPLE STEPS AND YOU'RE CONNECTED
- PLAIN SPEAKING HELP
- FULL ACCESS PROVIDED
- DEDICATED HOMEPAGE SUPPORTING ACCESS ALL AREAS USERS

FREE ONE MONTH CONNECT TIME WITH COUNTY INTERNET SERVICES

The BIG Room

Access All Areas

Your guarantee of Internet value

Compatible with Windows®PC, Windows®95 & Macintosh®

http://www.team17.com/TBR

ocean

COVERDISC

CD version only

Transport Tycoon Deluxe

Microprose ● (01454) 893893 ● Playable demo

To install: choose game from PC Review main menu and press on Install button. Then quit to DOS, go to the Tycoon directory and type run. Transport Tycoon Deluxe is compatible with Windows.

Microprose has gone from strength to strength with its latest foray, Transport Tycoon Deluxe, pushing back the boundaries of this genre even further! This fully playable demo will allow you to start your own transport network and also sample some of the new features that are in the deluxe version.

Requires: 486, 25Mhz, SVGA and 4Mb of RAM

Space

Andromeda Interactive ● (01235 529595)

To install: run from PC Review main menu by double clicking and follow the on-screen prompts.

A multimedia, enclyclopaedia and presentation program demo which in its full form should prove invaluable for anyone who is interested in space. Like its sister product Cars, it has over 1,000 full colour images and full video and audio tracks to enter the world beyond space.

Requires: 386DX, 4Mb RAM, double speed CD-ROM drive, SVGA.

Renegade 2

Mindscape ● (01444) 246333

To install: choose game from PC Review main menu and press on Install button. Then quit to DOS, go to the REN2 directory and type run. This game requires 560K of free memory.

Fans of the 3D space combat genre will sell their space suits for this. A fully playable mission in this space-bound blaster will have you struggling at the controls as you enter into a bitter battle for mastery of your space sector.

Requires: 486 66Mhz, (pentium recommended) 8Mb, SVGA and SoundBlaster compatible sound card.

Rise of the Robots 2 — Resurrection

Acclaim ● (0171) 344 5000

To install: choose game from PC Review main menu and press on Install button. Then quit to DOS, go to the RISE2 directory and type RISE2. Now configure the program using the on-screen instructions.

A good looking, fully rendered, fighting game, this playable demo allows two people to battle it for three rounds using up to two of the nine characters available in the full version.

Requires: 486 33Mhz, 4Mb RAM, VGA. Compatible with most sound cards.

Descent 2

Interplay ● (01628) 423666

To install: run from PC Review main menu. Now quit to DOS and type run.

The world of multiplayer 3D rendered games was turned on its head last year by the arrival of Descent. This rolling demo shows the uprated weapons and boasts the new rocking soundtracks!

Requires: 486DX 50Mhz, 8Mb, SVGA, Soundblaster compatibles

Cars

Andromeda Interactive ● (01235) 529595

To install: Run from PC Review main menu. Now quit to DOS and type RUN.

This is an excellent reference multimedia product for any car buff! Put together with the aid of the National Motor Museum, invaluable for car lovers and has over 1,000 full colour images.

Requires: 386DX, 4Mb RAM, double-speed CD-ROM drive, SVGA.

Ian Botham's International Cricket '96

Mirage ● (01260) 29909

To install: install PC Review main menu. Open a DOS window in '95, install and then type run.bat and then follow the on-screen prompts.

Cricket fans prepare to be hit for six! Ian Botham's International Cricket '96 has England's fine all-rounder Ian on video to help you through the perils and pitfalls of international cricket. Give it a try: can you do better than the actual team?

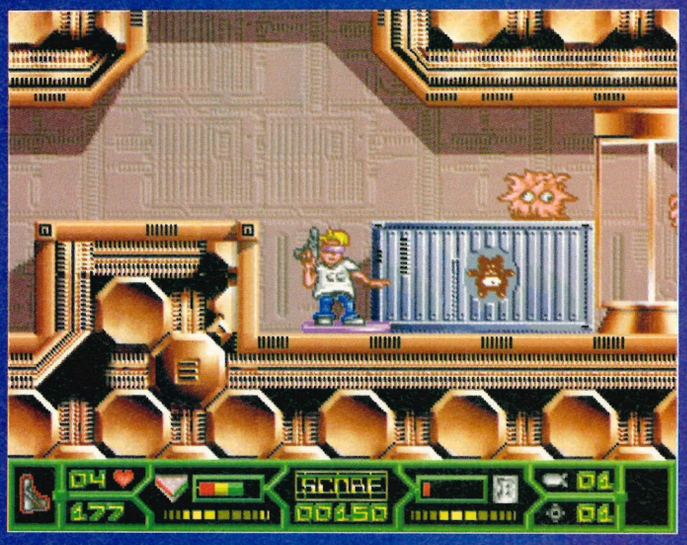
Ian Botham's Int Cricket 96 requires Windows '95, 486DX. 8Mb, SVGA and Soundblaster or compatibles.

Last month's CD

Please note that we made a mistake last month when we supplied you with the telephone number of the suppliers of Arts & Letters v 3.0 on the February issue CD-ROM. The correct number should be (01202) 722554. We apologise for any inconvenience that this may have caused you.

Cyril Cyberpunk

US DREAMS ● (01483) 728397



▲ *Here's our Cyril — in all his glory. Shooting teddy bears has never been such mindless, relaxing fun! So get zapping!*

To install: Choose game from PC Review main menu and press on INSTALL button. Then quit to DOS, go to the CC directory and type run.

Cyril Cyberpunk, is a full, six levels of platform blasting action where you get to play a kid called Cyril, who gets about on a hoverboard and does battle against the mutant cyborg teddy bear hordes, called the Flufs who are trying to take over the Earth. Yes, so you may have heard the plot-line a few time before, but this really is quite a nice little 2D scrolling shooter with simple yet stylish sprites and all of the ingredients that you would expect to find in a platform-based shoot 'em up. The game is Gravis Joypad compatible for all of you reformed console owners and should help to pleasantly remind you of al those many carefree hours you spent before you decided that there was more to life than Sonic. All of the ingredients are here. There are weapon pick ups, bombs, energy power ups and even door keys that you must collect in order to make your way through the six levels. You would had to pay a pretty penny for a game like this not in the not so distant past so why not load it up, put your feet up and relax from all of the brain-busting games that you usually play and lose yourself in a little bit of mind-less blasting.

Cyril Cyberpunk requires, 486DX, 4Mb, VGA and runs in DOS.

Quitting to DOS for Win '95 Users

Windows '95 is an excellent interface, as we all agree at PC Review, however as people are still just getting used to it, and this includes some game developers, not all games will run easily from Windows and you will have to quit to DOS before running a program. Where this is the case, and where you are using Windows '95, please use the following points in order to get our DOS-based games running.

1) After you have installed a game by double clicking on the PC Review install icon, you must quit to DOS. Do this by selecting the Microsoft Start Icon on your Win '95 desktop. Choose the shutdown menu and highlight Re-start mode.

2) After selecting this, press the F8 button whilst the machine reboots. It should go to a screen that asks which option you want. Please select DOS Prompt.

3) Once the DOS prompt appears, change to the directory that contains Ren2 and then type run.

Virtual Karts

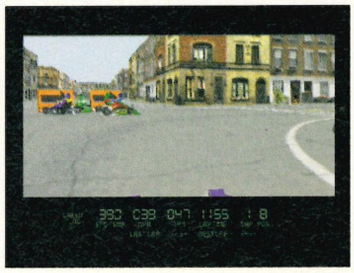
Microprose ● (01454) 893893



▲ ***Racing around the streets can have its advantages — now didn't I see the manager of Bastards Bank crossing the roads earlier?***

To run, select Virtual Karts from the Games sub menu in the PC Review menu screen. Alternatively it will run from DOS by changing to your CD ROM drive letter and changing to the VKARTS directory (CD VKARTS <enter>) and typing VKART. The game will now run directly from DOS.

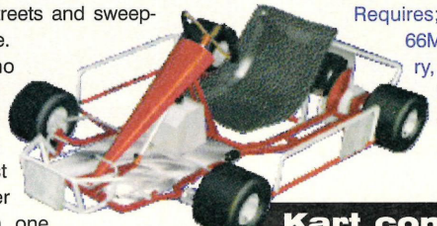
Step up, strap in and screech off, in this European exclusive treat for PC Review readers — a fully playable demo of Microprose's Virtual Karts, which graces this month's cover CD ROM. The action can be viewed from a variety of camera angles, all switchable during play, and takes place on a beautiful 3D background that will take you through city streets and sweeping countryside.



▲ ***The people of the town have gone to great lengths to ensure that the racers are kept on the straight and narrow.***

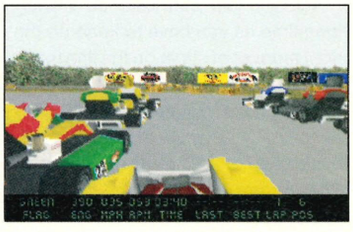
This demo version allows you to complete one full race against the computer opponents on one of the 12 tracks that are available on the full version. It is guaranteed to have you racing by the seat of your pants. In a Kart this is only about three inches above the ground and is travelling past at about 50 miles an hour. So remember to take extra care on the corners otherwise you'll be bound to leave some pretty nasty skid marks behind.

Requires; 486DX2 with 66Mhz, 8Mb memory, DOS 5 or Windows and a sound card.



Kart controls

Mouse	Left button — accelerator
Joystick	Fire — accelerator
F1 / F12	Change camera angles
Arrow up	Look up
Arrow down	Look down



▲ ***Here you are all juiced up and in the thick of it.***



▲ ***Running into the back of opponents will slow you down bad!!***

Work at Mission Studios long enough and you'll get REALLY good at geography.

Matthew Harmon
Vice-President of Development/Jetfighter III Lead Programmer.
Mission Studios Corporation.

Featuring:
2,000,000 square miles of scenery.

First-person cinematic interface.

Extensively landscaped and populated game world.

Seamless point-to-point flight.

Free-flight capability.

US GOLD

MISSION STUDIOS

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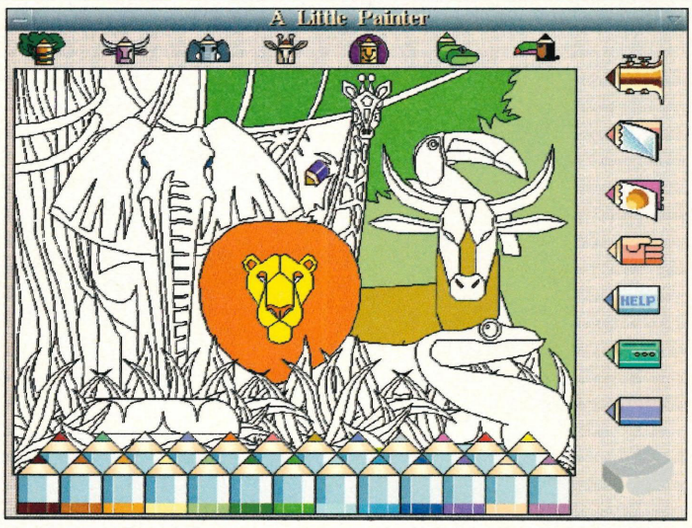
JETFIGHTER III

COVERDISC

CD Version only

Shareware Shopping

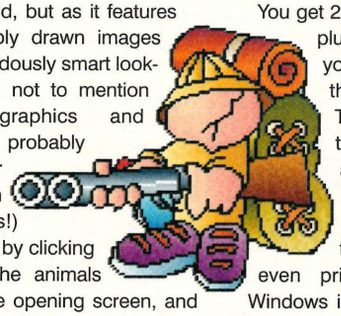
Shareware Shopping lets you sample the delights of the pick of the month's shareware direct from your cover CD or floppy disk. We rate it, you try it and if you like it you register — it's as simple as that!



▲ *Hmm, which colour next I wonder?*

Little Painter

Little Painter is a colouring program for beginners. It is largely aimed at young children aged between three and eight-years-old, but as it features some superbly drawn images and a tremendously smart looking interface, not to mention animated graphics and sounds, it is probably suitable for older children (and adults!) too. You start by clicking on one of the animals shown on the opening screen, and then filling each area with the colour of your choice to build up a complete picture. In the shareware version there are just seven images, but dozens more are supplied on the registered CD-ROM version.



While you are working on your painting, a safari hunter (or a deep sea diver, depending on the picture) pops up and gives you the verdict so far, with either a shake of the head or an encouraging thumbs-up.

You get 25 colours to choose from, plus a help button that gives you a quick preview of how the picture should look. There is also an undo button in the form of a rubber and you have the ability to load and save pictures and even copy them to the clipboard. You can even print them out on any Windows installed printer, but there is no confirmation button and a younger child could accidentally waste a lot of colour ink by simply exploring the icons.

Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ●

Price: $29.95

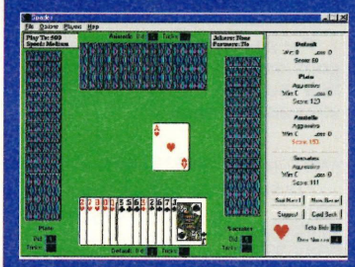
PC REVIEW RATING

8

Spades

If you're tired of playing Hearts — the Windows card game generously supplied by Microsoft — why not move across to Spades? This is an excellent implementation of yet another form of contract Whist and it offers many more configurable options and different styles of play for your opponents.

If you haven't come across Spades before, it involves dealing out 13 cards to each of the four players, who then take it in turn to state how many tricks they will win with spades as trumps. The more accurate you are, the more points you score, but you can also go for no tricks at all and gain an extra bonus. Although the concept is simple, there's a lot of hidden depth to the game. It's also a hard game to master and it should provide a good few hours of enjoyable card play.



▲ *A new variant on Whist and Hearts.*

The card animation is nicely done and the cards are clear and legible, although it's a pity the game screen is fixed at 640 by 480 rather than adaptable for higher resolutions. There's a longer than usual shareware nag screen, but perhaps that's not surprising given the poor registration rate of shareware programs these days.

Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ●

Price: $12.50

PC REVIEW RATING

7

Winfish

Believe it or not, Winfish is a deep sea fishing simulation. You're after tuna, marlin, anything that will come leaping out of the water and give you some real sport.

The screen display is a rendered view of the back of the fisherman's head and the stern of the fishing boat. Using the appropriate buttons, you select a rod, a reel, a suitable bait and then use the radar to locate the right fish. If you manage to work out the rather ponderous controls, and get your bait to the depth at which the fish are lurking, you'll soon be rewarded by a bite. Just set the hook and get ready to play the fish.



▲ *You won't get wet, but it's just as hard as the real thing.*

Actually this can take an awfully long time as you have to keep up the right amount of strain on the line to tire the fish completely and then haul him to the surface. Not easy, but still fun.

Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ●

Price: $20

PC REVIEW RATING

8

The coverdisc hotline is (01451) 810788, open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm

Defend The Alamo

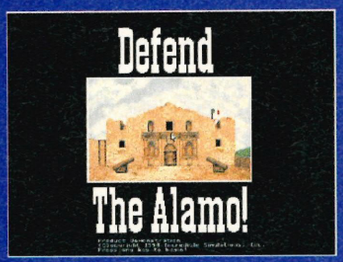
Defend the Alamo claims to be the first ever computer simulation to recreate those 13 fateful days at the Alamo back in Texas in 1836.

Unsurprisingly enough, the game begins by putting you in command of the 156 volunteers who elected to defend the crumbling mission at the Alamo in the face of an assault by General Santa Anna and his 4,000 Mexican troops.

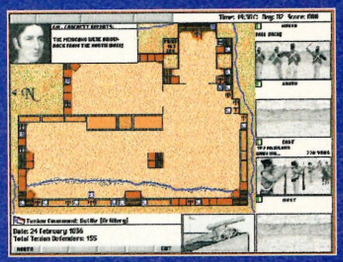
The troops are divided into platoons, each with a handful of riflemen, plus several cannon and of course the three famous personalities, Colonel Travis, Colonel Jim Bowie and Davy Crockett.

As you probably recall (if you were paying attention during history lessons), the Alamo defenders were all wiped out completely, down to the very last man. But in this game, you get to see if you could have done any better — will you place men all around the walls or concentrate your forces to defeat each attack in turn?

The game uses a cleverly designed interface and introduces some excellent ideas — not only is it a traditional style overhead wargame ,but you also get digitised images to help you spot what's going on and various messages from key players in the drama. These messages keep you informed about the carnage going on all around you and rather than seeing the action develop, you follow it by reading reports and watching the casualty lists. Unfortunately the instructions are non-existent and it'll take you a fair while to decide how to carry out simple tasks, though the registered version comes with full details.



▲ ***Get into action from the very first opening screen of Alamo.***



▲ ***Alamo uses a mixture of overhead views and messages.***

Evaluation versions from: Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ● Price: $29.95

PC REVIEW RATING

6

LOADING

CD-ROM: To run this month's Shareware, from the Contents menu select Shopping then select the name of the demo that you want to play.

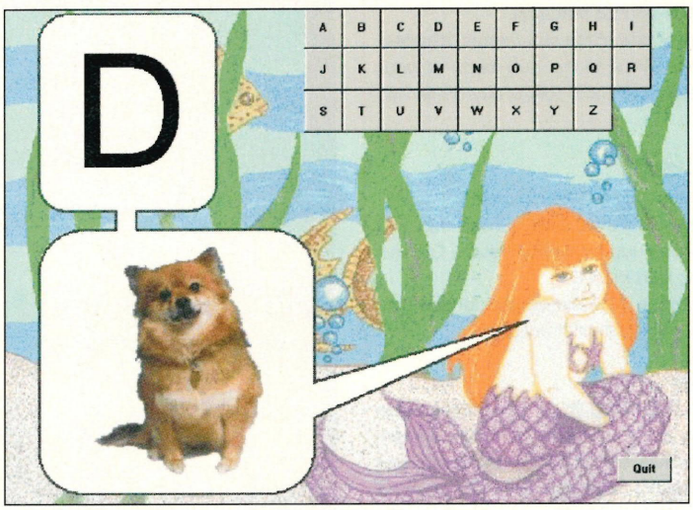
Talking Teacher 2.0

Talking Teacher 2.0 is a set of four educational games for very young children that aims to teach them the letters of the alphabet, numbers and the use of the computer. The interface is designed so that a child can select a game, play it, and exit back to the main window without any help from an adult. All that is required is the ability to use a mouse.

Talking Teacher is designed to hold the attention of even the youngest users while teaching them valuable lessons and computer skills.

The main screen gives a graphical representation of each game — pick a letter, pick a number, find the letter and find the number. Only the former two are available in the shareware version and these consist of choosing a letter or number with the mouse, hearing it spoken and seeing either a related object or that number of objects. Choose the letter "D" for example and you see a dog. Pick "4" and you can see and count four objects.

Each of the games is designed using sampled voices and colourful evocative graphics. As this is a talking program, you'll need a PC equipped with a Windows compatible sound card and a video colour depth of 256 colours. Good fun.



▲ ***Colourful fun for tiny tots and their chums.***

6

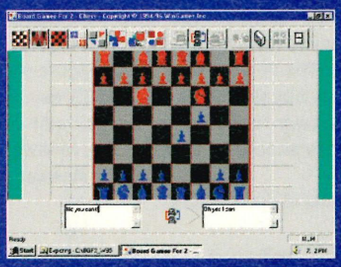
Board Games for 2

Board Games for 2 is a Windows 95 program that offers you two player gaming either on the same PC or over a network. You can choose chess, backgammon, draughts, Goban, flagships, pipes, race chase or Fox and Hounds.

It works best over a network as you can send messages to each other as you play, but the main fault is that the computer doesn't check the validity of your moves, making it easy to cheat or accidentally carry out an illegal move. The graphics are good and the digitised sound effects make it well worth experimenting with — great for offices and far less demanding on the network than installing Doom!

Evaluation versions from Creative Shareware ● (01282) 611323 ● Price: $14.95

PC REVIEW RATING



▲ ***No more face to face games, now we've got remote games.***

6

Cover CD-ROM

Our helpline service is open to everyone with a PC Review CD.

The PC Review cover CD-ROM disc is rigorously checked and scanned for all known viruses at each stage during its production. However, cover CDs are used at the reader's own risk. PC Review can therefore accept no responsibility for damage to either data or hardware caused by the use of our CD-ROM. If circumstances dictate that we are unable to supply the stated program, we will endeavour to provide alternative software. Sorry, but PC Review will not be held responsible for content changes.

CD disclaimer

We cannot guarantee 100% that our cover mounted CD-ROM will work on every single PC ever manufactured.

Help! My CD-ROM isn't working

If only some of the programs on your CD-ROM crash or will not load then you probably have a memory problem, in this case read the 'Before you start' section. If you are still completely stuck after that then ring our cover disk hotline on (0451) 810788, which is open 9.00 am till 5.00 pm on weekdays.

01451 810788

Help! My CD-ROM is damaged

A very small number of the CDs we duplicate may get damaged during transit. If you think yours is faulty, we'll replace it. Send the CD in a jiffy bag, with a suitably sized, self-addressed envelope and postage to the value of 28p (55p from overseas) and the form below, to: DiskXPress, Unit 7, Willow Court, Bourton Industrial Park, Bourton-on-the-water, Gloucestershire, GL54 2HQ. . ..ase DO NOT send the cover CD-ROM disc back to PC Review.

Name .....
Address .....
.....
.....
.....

The CD-ROM disc on my copy of PC Review was damaged. Please send me a replacement — I enclose return postage to the value of 28p (55p overseas) and the original disc.

PC REVIEW CD loading instructions.

Loading your PC Review CD is now easier than ever thanks to our new, PCR intelligent loading program, Florence. Although not all programs will need 8Mb or more memory to run, please note that to run all programs on the PCR disk we recommend that your system has a minimum of 256 colours (SVGA) and has a video card with a minimum of 1Mb of memory and at least 8Mb of RAM memory.

Here's how to get your PCR CD-ROM running...

1. Turn on your computer and allow it to boot.
2. Insert your CD-ROM into the CD-ROM drive, close it and wait for the CD drive light to go out.

Now you can run the PCR CD-ROM from one of the three user interfaces below but you MUST run a version of Windows (3.1 or higher which is already installed on your hard drive).

FROM DOS:

1. Log onto the drive and directory that contains Windows and type WIN <return> and then follow the instructions below...

TO RUN FROM WINDOWS 3.1 and 3.11

1. Go to File Manager in Windows (the filing cabinet icon) and open the file contains your CD-ROM drive.
2. To run the CD-ROM for the first time and to set up a PCR icon to run all future disks, highlight START.EXE and double click on it.
3. You may now install video drivers needed to run the demos if needed.
4. With video drivers resident, you may go to the contents page by either clicking on it or double clicking on PCRCDROM.exe in file manager.
5. From the PCR Contents Page, simply select one of the sub-menus, (Games, MultiMedia, Shopping, PCR TV or Utilities). Once in the sub-menu of your choice, click on the programs that you want to run and follow any on-screen prompts.

TO RUN ON WINDOWS '95

1. Turn on your computer and ensure that Windows '95 has loaded.
2. Now insert the PCR CD-ROM disk into your CD Drive. It should self-load and give you the option to either install a program group for the PC Review CD and configure your system to play video clips or start the CD.
3. Click on start to get to the PCR contents page. Now simply click on the programs that you want to run and follow any on-screen instructions.

Windows '95 users only

Some programs may install to your hard disk using DOS. You may need to quit to DOS to run them. The easiest way to do this is to close the system down and reboot. When the 'Starting Windows '95' message appears press the F8 key and select the COMMAND PROMPT option. If after this you find your CD-ROM drive does not respond — DON'T PANIC — as Windows '95 rems out drivers it does not like. To un-rem the CD-ROM driver lines, type 'edit autoexec.bat' and delete any rems — Windows will clearly mark the lines it has tampered with. If you still have problems you can ring the PC Review disc hotline on (01451) 810788, open Mon-Fri 9.00am – 5.00pm.

Command & Conquer

Virgin • (0171) 368 2255

Select Command & Conquer from the Games menu on the CD. Follow the instructions to install: once finished, the game will run automatically.



Widely considered to be the best game of last year, this manic combination of strategy, action and heavy-duty tactical warfare now comes to you in demo form: three whole levels from the game, featuring some hectic action. Send your lone commando in to take out strategic targets, or painstakingly build up your defences and prepare a humungous attack force in readiness to reduce your pathetic enemy's base to burning rubble.

The controls are pretty simple: select a unit — such as a soldier, tank or helicopter — and a box will appear around it (you can select more than one unit by holding down the shift button and then selecting each unit, or by holding down the mouse button and drawing a box around all the units you want). Now you can indicate a place that you want your unit(s) to go to, or a target for them to attack. The bar above the unit indicates how healthy it is — green for 'very healthy', yellow for 'a bit ill', and red for 'about to kick it'.

The boxes to the right of the screen show your construction options, from power plants and weapons factories to infantry, tanks and helicopters. But you can only build as long as you have money — the number at the top of the screen — you can make money by building a tiberium refinery and harvesting the valuable plant.

486 DX/33, 8Mb RAM, Windows 3.1 or Windows '95



BEFORE YOU START

PCs are funny things, for instance a memory problem can look like a disc problem, so we recommend that you configure your memory before you run this month's disc. To see how much memory you have type MEM at the DOS prompt. If the figure beside the line 'largest executable program size' is less than 550K your system is not set up correctly. The easiest way to reconfigure your memory is to use the Memmaker program. From the DOS prompt type MEMMAKER. The introduction screen will now appear, press the ENTER key. On the next screen select the CUSTOM SETUP option by pressing the SPACEBAR. On the next page make sure the answer to the option 'Do you wish to use any programs that need expanded memory' is 'No' and press the ENTER key. Below there are six options and these should be answered as follows:

Option	Answer
1) Specify which drivers and TSR's to include in optimisation?	No
2) Scan the upper memory aggressively?	Yes
3) Optimise upper memory for use with Windows?	No
4) Use monochrome region (B000 - B7FF) for running programs? (unless you have a mono monitor)	Yes
5) Keep current EMM386 memory exclusions and inclusions?	No
6) More extended BIOS data area from conventional to upper memory?	Yes

Follow the rest of the on-screen instructions, and Memmaker will reboot your system with your memory correctly configured.

ocean

PC, PC CD-ROM, MAC, AMIGA, MEGA DRIVE, SNES, PLAYSTATION, SATURN, CD32, JAGUAR, GAMEBOY.

TEAM 17

WORMS they've turned

Ever felt like mercilessly blowing away your bank manager, tax collector, teacher, brother, sister, best friend, worst enemy or Jeremy Beadle?

Now you can, with Worms, the game of the year from Team 17 and Ocean.

It's totally pointless violence and totally addictive gameplay. Perfect.



What's it all about?

Well, rather like the morning after a really hot curry, the feeling is impossible to explain. You simply have to experience it.

So no matter what else you do today, get hold of a copy of Worms and blast away. Who knows, maybe you'll have the World's hardest worm.

© TEAM 17 1995

WORMS PLAYABLE PC DEMO - http://www.team17.com/

NEWS

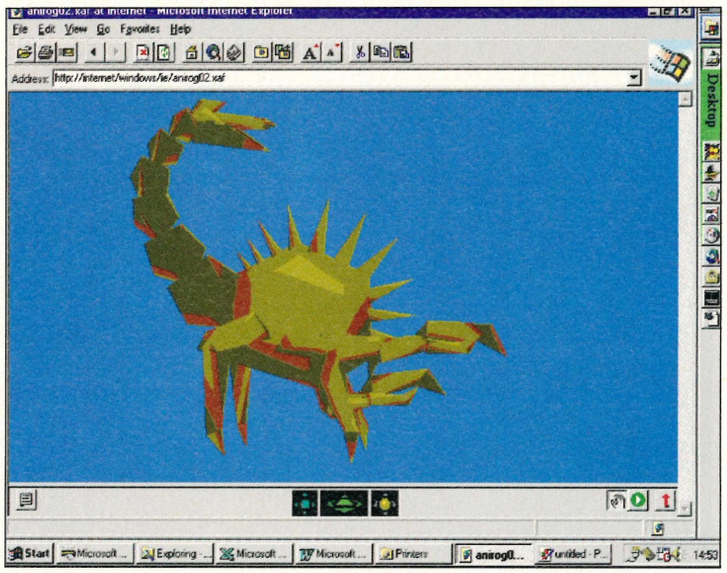
MSN comes under fire from rival service providers, while America On-line launches in the UK. And SoftRAM, the "memory doubler' that does nothing, is withdrawn.

Microsoft caught in Net

Microsoft has received further warning from the US Justice Department that it cannot disregard other Internet service providers. The Department has been investigating accusations that Microsoft Internet Explorer disables World Wide Web browsers made by rival companies, and is currently questioning firms such as CompuServe and Netscape about the issue. Apparently, many 'net users found that they were unable to get on-line via their normal service providers after installing Windows 95, because the operating system modified their WinSocks (communications protocols used by Web browsers to connect them to the 'net) to bring them into line with the settings needed by Explorer. Netscape Navigator, the browser for which most Web pages are created, was one of the key sufferers, and even though Netscape recognised the problem prior to the launch of Windows 95, the Justice Department deferred the complaint. Microsoft has now come clean by admitting that the original version of Windows 95 was incompatible with several Web browsers, and claims that the problem has now been remedied.

Microsoft Network was originally set up as an alternative to the Internet, but it has not taken off in quite the way that Microsoft visualised, forcing the company to recognise the importance of the net. MSN will now act much like other service providers, although there will still be a large number of MSN-specific services available.

• If you don't have the hardware or the inclination to upgrade to Windows 95, Microsoft Internet Explorer will soon be available for Windows 3.1.



America On-line in UK



CompuServe and MSN should be quaking in their virtual boots following the announcement that America On-line, the world's largest on-line service provider, is launching in the UK. America On-line currently has 4.5 million users in the US, more than MSN and CompuServe combined, and its flashy, idiot-proof interface looks likely to win many British fans.

Although MSN and CompuServe have a considerable head start in Britain, AOL UK is hoping to tempt users away with its competitive pricing structure. Services will cost £5.95 per month for the first five hours and £1.95 for every hour beyond that. This is considerably cheaper than MSN, and although it is comparable to CompuServe's prices, CompuServe charges premium rates for some of its services while AOL UK aims to keep its prices consistent.

In addition, CompuServe's front-end is no different from its American version, including the American-accented speech, but AOL UK has redesigned its front-end to make it more acceptable to the British palate. The voice of Joanna Lumley will welcome UK users to the service and inform them whenever they have mail — enough of an incentive to the average British male, we'd have thought — and there are numerous UK services which use it including Time Out.

If you're interested in AOL UK, call (0171) 385 9404. Alternatively, call (0800) 279 1234 for a free trial.

Can Joanna Lumley woo users away from CompuServe and MSN?

In brief.....

CYBERIA LAUNCHES GAMES CLUB

Cyberia, the Internet cafe, is now holding a games club every Thursday evening between 6.30pm and 10.30pm. The club will take place in TransCyberia, situated below the cafe at Whitfield Street, London W1P 5RE. You'll have the chance to play all the latest network games, as well as entering the Cyberia Tournament which will be linked through all Cyberia's UK cafes. Call Cyberia on (0171) 209 0982.

PC rides high as Apple turns sour

Apple, manufacturer of the popular Macintosh computer, has announced huge losses during 1995. Originally the Mac became extremely popular thanks to its idiot-proof graphical user interface (GUI), which provided users with a friendly alternative to DOS on the PC. But Apple failed to capitalise on its advantage by licensing the Mac to other firms to help build up a clone industry like the one which has made the PC so widely available. While Apple could have taken on a couple of large firms, it can't compete with hundreds of PC manufacturers all competing to produce cheap, Wintel (Microsoft Windows/Intel) compatible machines. To make things worse for Apple, the PC now has its own graphical front end in Windows 95, bringing it ever closer to the Mac in terms of user-friendliness.

With Escom, the company which bought the rights to the Amiga, also announcing a substantial loss, it looks increasingly likely that the PC will soon become the only viable computer for the home user.

Dungeon keeps slipping



Sigh. Bullfrog's long awaited Dungeon Keeper has been delayed yet again. The game, in which the player builds a dungeon and then uses traps and monsters to protect it from marauding knights, offers a unique twist on the traditional dungeon exploration game and is one of the most eagerly anticipated games of 1996. Originally slated for a late 1995 release, Dungeon Keeper was initially delayed because Bullfrog wanted to optimise the code to enable it to run well on a 486. Apparently, that has now been achieved, but the game has slipped even further because the programming team wants to ensure that the gameplay is as balanced as possible. Dungeon Keeper is now expected to appear at the end of March, fingers crossed.

As a result of this, Syndicate Wars, the sequel to Bullfrog's best-selling Syndicate (rated 9, Issue 21), will not appear until June. This will be followed by Theme Hospital, a hospital management game with a humorous twist, some time in the Autumn, and Gene Wars shortly after.

We hope to bring you a full review of Dungeon Keeper in our next issue — but don't hold your breath.

Bullfrog can be reached on (01483) 579399.

Hacker knackers talking bus stop

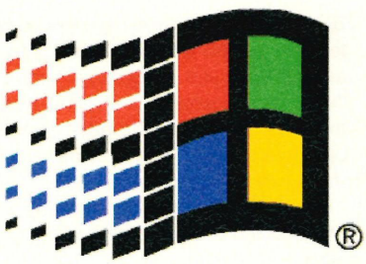
The miracles of modern technology will never cease to amaze, but that isn't the only reason why residents of Leeds have been rendered speechless by the city's new talking bus stops. The bus stops contain digitally stored messages which announce the destinations of buses in the area, and have been designed to help those who are visually impaired or have difficulty reading. Unfortunately, a hacker managed to break into one of the battery operated boxes and reprogrammed it to unleash a torrent of swear words at surprised customers. A spokeswoman for Metro, the local transport authority, claims that the problem has now been rectified. "We've had the necessary alterations done and it won't happen again," she said.

Domark gets animated

Games publisher Domark has signed up Scottish development and graphics house Digital Animations, something of a hot property, it seems, to work on an ambitious new title. Domark fought off competition from several major publishers to complete the deal, said to be worth six figures. The game, Steel Legions, is expected by Christmas and Domark envisages it becoming an industry benchmark thanks to its innovative network play.

Domark is on (0181) 780 2222.

SoftRAM 95 recalled



SoftRAM 95 — not so hot with Windows 95?

Following a Federal Trade Commission investigation and two lawsuits, SoftRAM 95 has been withdrawn from sale by its developer, Syncronys. The RAM doubler was rushed onto the shelves last August to coincide with the launch of memory hungry Windows 95 and has sold extremely well, currently riding high at number six in the Gallup software charts. Despite the fact that it was released with the Designed for Windows 95 logo on the packaging, Syncronys has admitted that it doesn't actually increase memory under Windows 95 at all. How Syncronys actually got hold of the logo, which is only awarded to products which have been fully tested with Windows 95, remains a mystery to Microsoft. Although SoftRAM 95 was submitted for testing, it actually failed.

Allegations of fraud have been levelled at Syncronys for marketing a product that doesn't work. However, SoftRAM 95 has received favourable reviews in several magazines, some of which are highly respected title.

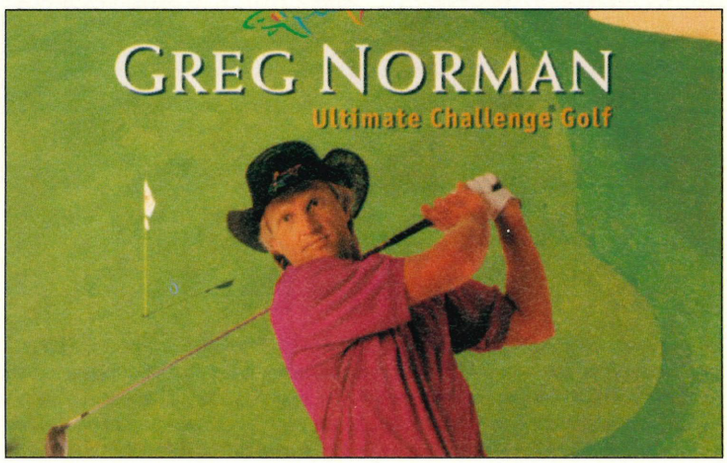
Grolier plugs in

Grolier Electronic Publishing, the multi-million dollar multimedia company, has launched a games division. Called 3 Prong Plug, the company will be based at Grolier's headquarters in Connecticut and will develop its own titles as finding and signing up other developers from around the world.

Grolier's first title will be SFPD Homicide Case File: The Body in the Bay, which has already been nominated for an award at the MILIA multimedia show in Cannes. Based on a real case, it's a murder mystery in which you have to solve the case in only two weeks. This will followed by an interactive horror movie, Terror TRAX, and Greg Norman Ultimate Challenge Golf. Look for reviews in PC Review next month.

• Grolier Interactive Europe, Grolier's European arm, is to relocate to Britain from Paris shortly.

Meanwhile you can contact Grolier on (00331) 47459445.

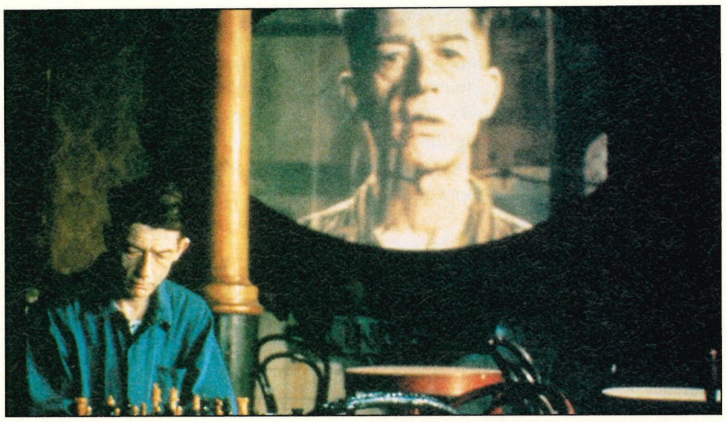


Big Brother is watching you

We've all made jokes about Bill Gates' plans for world domination, but Microsoft's Big Brother image appears to be getting more and more real by the minute. Customers of the Select 2.0 programme, which gives users the chance to buy software at a significantly reduced rate, may well find Microsoft bursting onto their premises to check their hard disks for 'illegal' software.

Although Microsoft claims that the software audit scheme has been devised to help users 'control and manage' their software, it is plain that the company is worried about piracy. It seems that even large companies are not above the odd infringement. However, the scheme is not quite a scary as it sounds. Visions of Microsoft raiding companies in the middle of the night, clapping the guilty parties in irons and sentencing them to a year's hard labour at its Redmond campus should be consigned to the memory hole. The audits will not take place unannounced, and if anyone is caught with more than £6,500 worth of dodgy software they will simply have to pay for the audit.

Home users should be unaffected by the scheme, but it's worth noting that 'borrowing' software from the office to use on your own PC is, in fact, piracy.





7th Level seeks Grail

Python fans rejoice! 7th Level, publisher of the excellent Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time, is currently turning Monty Python and the Holy Grail into an action adventure. The Quest for the Holy Grail, as it will be known, is being co-produced by former-Python Eric Idle and features footage from the movie (including previously unseen outtakes), several of Terry Gilliam's bizarre animations and all your favourite characters. We can't vouch for the shrubbery-loving Knights of Ni, but you'll definitely come across the Bridgekeeper of Death, Tim the Enchanter, the Virginal Sisters of Anthrax and many others as you gallop around the countryside, fighting monsters, burning witches and indulging in all manner of silliness. We hope it turns out to be rather better than the last Monty Python game, a rather odd shoot 'em-up from Virgin Games which appeared in the late eighties and involved collecting lots of Spam. Hmm.

The Quest for the Holy Grail is due out in early autumn 1996, and you can check out its progress on-line at www.7thlevel.com. Or phone (01625) 500800.

Deals on wheels



Buying a PC is a bewildering experience for most people, what with all the different options and off-putting jargon. These factors, along with pressure from the odd over-enthusiastic sales person can force inexperienced customers into making expensive mistakes.

But a company has been set up to help you find your ideal PC, all from the privacy of your own home. The brainchild of Martin Slagter, the former European head of Dell, Habitech uses a team of agents who visit customers at home, demonstrate and explain PC technology and then find the computer which matches their needs. Reputable companies such as Compaq have agreed to sell their PCs through Habitech's scheme, so customers can rest assured that they won't end up with any old junk.

The scheme is aimed mainly at families, but anyone will be able to use it if they think they need a helping hand. Habitech's "Welcome" package includes 'at-home' set-up of the PC, software and Internet access, and full on-site support. Customers are kept in close contact with Habitech's agents in person, by phone or on-line, enabling them to keep up to date with the latest technological developments as well as discussing any problems or worries they have about their PCs and software.

Agents will also be available to arrange a "technology party" where the ins and outs of PCs can be explained to a group of people. Not quite as much fun as an Ann Summers party, perhaps, but then it beats trying to get sense out of your average clueless computer store salesman.

Gimme Shelter

Shelter, the National Campaign for Homeless People now has its own Web page. It gives advice on homelessness, how to help Shelter campaign about government proposals which weaken homelessness laws, contains extracts from the charity's ROOF magazine and also includes a feedback page where you can air your views.

Shelter can be found at http://www.vois.org.uk/shelter

Microsoft brands PC

Software behemoth Microsoft has finally put its name on a PC. Manufactured by Packard Bell, The Microsoft Station is a 133MHz Pentium with 16Mb RAM, 1.6Gb hard disk, 30 CD-ROM Microsoft titles, access to MSN and a Microsoft SideWinder joystick. It's available in the US at $3,499. But unfortunately is currently unavailable in this country.

Packard Bell is on (01753) 831914.

Radio station launches on Internet

Cyberville Radio, the UK's only Internet radio station, has begun broadcasting on a regular basis. An hourly programme is available on weekdays until Easter, when Cyberville Radio will up its airtime to four hours a day with extended transmissions at weekends.

"What Cyberville Radio has to offer is entertainment and information led programming on all aspects of the Internet and computing in general. Already Cyberville has produced features on how McLaren use computers to design racing cars, how CIX is donating Web space to charity, the controversy of the new Penthouse site, and we have some exclusive interviews with Microsoft, Silicon Graphics and other industry leaders," said station manager Robin Nixon. The broadcasts are transmitted using TrueSpeech, and listeners can visit the Cyberville site, download the TrueSpeech player and tune into the programme. Even better, listeners don't have to stay glued to the Cyberville site during the programme — you can start it up at the click of a button, and then surf the rest if the Web while it plays.

To tune in, go to http://www.compulink.co.uk/~cyberville/

Or you can contact the station on http://www.cyberville.co.uk/

Olé, Olé, Olé, Olé

Some of you may not know that Domark has plans for complete world domination — at least when it comes to footy management games. In the future you can expect to see European Championship, Allstars and other Euro league versions of the fantastic game, but for now the company's released the French, German and Italian league versions of the game, all of which are stand alone products. To celebrate this fact PC Review and Domark has got together to offer five winners a copy of all three of the above games (French, German, and Italian leagues — all in English of course), plus the main winner will receive a European Team Shirt of their own choice. So if you've always wanted to walk around decked in a fashionable AC Milan top, here's your chance.

To enter just look at the picture opposite and mark an 'x' where you think the ball should be. Then fill in the coupon below and send the whole lot to us by March 15th 1996.



Mark an X on the above where you think the ball should be.
Name .....
Address .....
Daytime 'phone number .....
Choice of team shirt if won (1)
Reserve choice of team shirt if won (2)
The address to send this coupon to is,
Those Balls Are Spotted, PC Review, Emap Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Net access made easy

Flummoxed by the 'net? Team 17 is launching Access All Areas, a CD-ROM which demystifies the Internet. Just enter you 'net details and it helps you to install 'net software so you can get online with the minimum of fuss. There's bags of information on all areas of the 'net, plus a tutorial and one month's free Internet access. AAA users will also find plenty of on-line support at http://www.team17.com/TBR/Access

Call Team 17 on (01924) 267776.

I am thankful for and love living in the age of technology. Still, it's too bad more fantasy and heroic elements from the ancient past haven't survived the progression of time. At least there's still myth in science.

Dan Kaufman
Programmer/Artist.
Mission Studios Corporation.

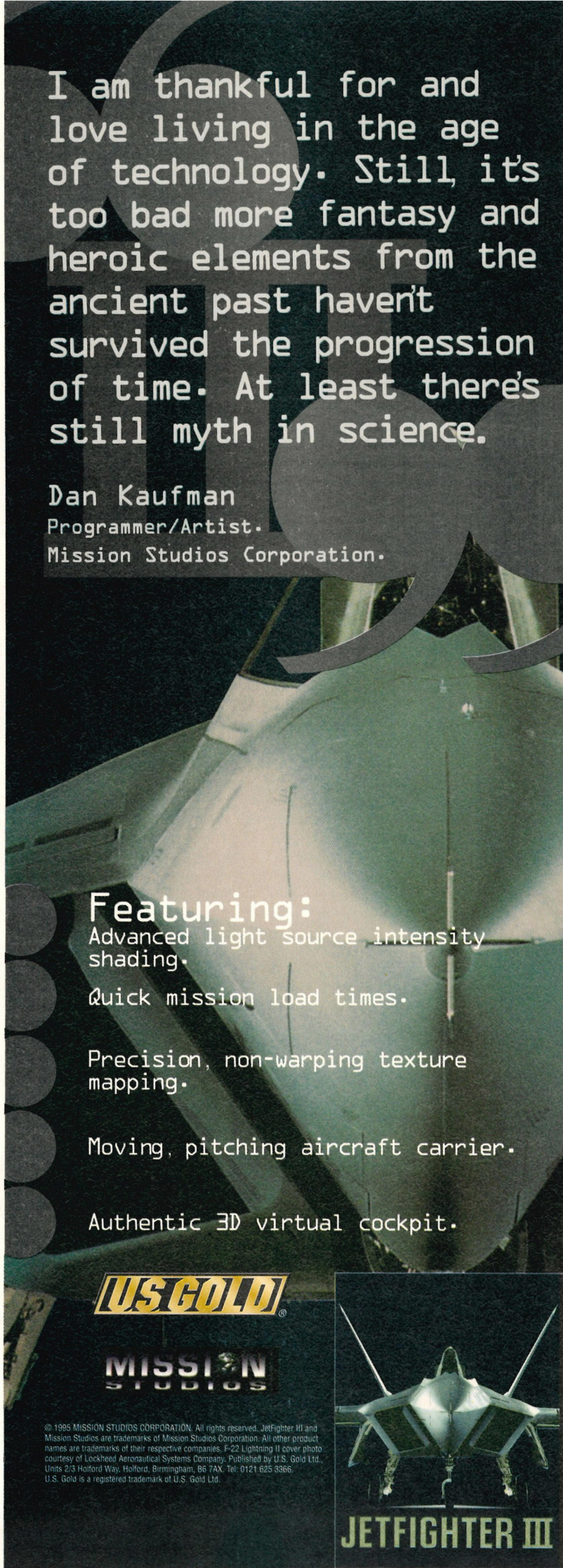
Featuring:
Advanced light source intensity shading.

Quick mission load times.

Precision, non-warping texture mapping.

Moving, pitching aircraft carrier.

Authentic 3D virtual cockpit.



US GOLD

MISSION STUDIOS

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JETFIGHTER III

New sites start here.



What's New in the UK

The continuously updated, searchable new-site service



http://www.emap.com/whatsnew

From the makers of Internet magazine

Product Information Number 68

Sierra buys Papyrus

After snapping up strategy game specialist Impressions last year, Sierra On-line has added US developer Papyrus to its rapidly expanding portfolio. Papyrus sprung to prominence with the extremely popular IndyCar Racing, and has recently produced a sequel (rated 9, Issue 50).

Both IndyCar games, along with NASCAR Racing, were published by Virgin Interactive in the UK, but Sierra now has sole rites to all Papyrus titles.

Contact Sierra on (01734) 303322.

SoftKey unlocks Windows 95

Anyone brought up on MS-DOS might find Windows 95 takes a lot of getting used to. If so, you might like to try SoftKey's WinTutor 95, which teaches you how to get it up and running and how to get the most out of it. It has different sections for brand new PC users, those upgrading from Windows 3.1 and those upgrading from Mac, plus a quick start section.

SoftKey International is on (0181) 789 5626.

Brother goes surfing

Cybernerds will welcome the arrival of the Brother Surfer, a 'net ready PC from Kyodai. The package comprises of a 486DX4 with 8MB RAM, 540MB hard disk and internal 14,400 modem. It comes pre-loaded with Windows '95 or Windows 3.1, and also includes a year's membership to Premier Internet and all the relevant software including the Super Mosaic Web Browser. It costs £1267.83 which includes a year's on site warranty.

Call Kyodai on (01279) 416888 for details.

"Remember folks, it's your votes that count..."

Those of you old enough to remember Canadian dodecagenerian telehost Hughie Green might remember this phrase from the seventies TV talent show, Opportunity Knocks. And that's about all it has to do with the Golden Joysticks awards ceremony, except your votes really do count...

The Golden Joystick is organised by EMAP Images, publishers of PC Review, and readers of Review and its sister magazines give the gongs to whichever games, games publishers and developers they see fit. It's the only awards ceremony of its kind in the UK, so don't waste that vote — enter now! The first ten entries out of the bag which each win a subscription to PC Review (can't be bad then). The categories are as follows:



My nomination for Best Computer Advertisement is .....
My nomination for Best Licensed Computer Game is .....
My nomination for Best Original Computer Game is .....
My nomination for Computer Game of the year is .....
My nomination for Computer Game Developer of the year is .....
My nomination for Technical Innovation in a Computer Game is .....
My nomination for Software House of the year is .....

Nominations must be for PC games released between January 95 and March 96.
Name .....
Address .....
.....
Postcode .....
Send your entries to: Vote For Me, PC Review, Emap Images, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

Win a Yamaha DB50XG sound card

Over £1,500 worth of Midi card must be won.



Plug your PC into...

- 237 Synthesisers
- 51 Guitars
- 48 Pianos
- 43 Organs
- 88 Basses
- 21 Drumkits
- 73 Strings
- 161 Percussion
- 71 Brass Instruments
- 21 Choirs
- 115 Special effects
- 61 Types of Digital Sequencing Program

The Yamaha DB50XG is 'probably the best sound card in the world' having been critically acclaimed by most of the world's PC and music press alike. It's a daughter board and plugs directly on to most Sound Blaster 16 sound cards or card with a Waveblaster compatible expansion socket. Based upon Yamaha's QS300 synth, it has full GS and GM modes yet at only £152 is probably the best, fully featured board hole even at twice the price!

However, this time around you may win the opportunity to test the DB50's potential for free. Each of its three, 24-bit effects processors could be working for your PC making music for nothing — and, being fully programmable, the results are only limited by your musical imagination. You can see by the list of features on this page, it is well endowed when it comes to plugging it into your existing systems, so open up your music compositions to a brave new world of music.

How to win

If you'd like the chance to be the proud owner of the DB50EG, then all you have to do is to put your musical talents to the test and answer the following questions:

1) How many beats are there to the bar in Common time?
2) Who had a hit with the song, "Pretty Vacant"?
3) Which US songster starred alongside Kevin Costner in the film, "The Bodyguard?"

Send your entries on a postcard to, PC Review, Priory Court, Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, to arrive here before 30th March. The first 10 correct entries out of the hat will each receive their Yamaha DB50XG and a hearty PC Review well done!

Not open to employees of EMAP Images or Yamaha. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. So there.

BATTLECRUISER 3000AD



TRADING

'Battlecruiser 3000AD is here and it's fair to say it's better than Elite in every department.'

94%

PC ATTACK



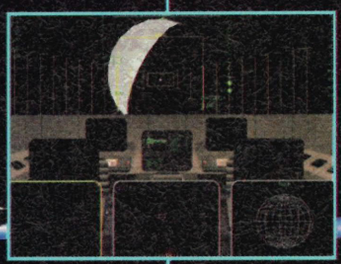
COMBAT

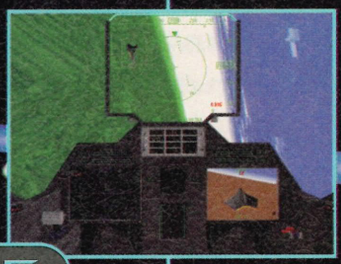
'It's far more simple to get into than say Frontier Elite II and to be honest it's more rewarding at the end of the day.'

9/10

PC REVIEW

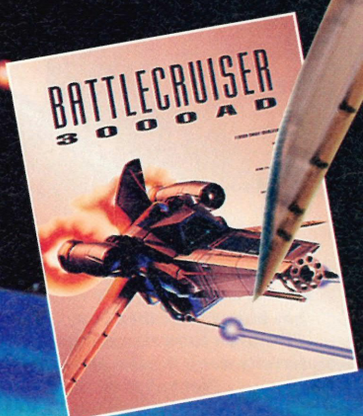
STRATEGY





RESOURCE MANAGEMENT





CREATED BY TAKE 2 INTERACTIVE SOFTWARE

AVAILABLE ON PC CD-ROM

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Distributed by Gametek UK Limited, 258 Bath Road, Slough, Berks SL1 4DX, United Kingdom. Tel. (01753) 553445 Fax. (01753) 554340





Normal service is now resumed...

WIN a Sony TV!

It's a first person, real-time 3D adventure that's genuinely innovative and amusing. It's called Normality — and last month you were treated to an exclusive playable demo of the game which featured a humungous chunk of the first level and much of the promise of Normality.

Because a television set is so central to solving the puzzle within the demo, we thought it would be fitting to give a state-of-the-art TV set to the prize winner. Here goes...

To all the owners of last month's amazing Normality demo — this is your chance to win an excellent Sony colour television thanks to Gremlin Interactive.

All you have to do to enter our interactive competition is to tell us how to switch on the TV in the demo.

Answers on a postcard or sealed-down envelope to Normality Competition, PC Review, EMAP Images, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. By 30th March, please.

Not open to employees of EMAP Images, Gremlin Interactive or Sony. The Editor's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into.



▲ ***For the best in big TVs you can't get better than this Sony TV. Its Trinitron tube rich colours and wonderfully deep blacks ensure any film will look stunning!***



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TAXAN
MONITORS



Future showing

The classics of the past, the best-sellers of the present and the stars of the future...

"Adventure lovers are spoilt for choice this month. Infogrames' follow-up to the Alone trilogy has finally arrived in the shape of Time Gate, Sierra has released the latest instalments in the Gabriel Knight and Police Quest sagas and the fantastic Roger Zelazny-penned Chronomaster provides a lushly graphic shot in the arm for US Gold."
Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

0 Hang the jolly old programmers
1 No redeeming features whatsoever
2 Dire
3 Poor
4 One or two good points but otherwise flawed
5 Average
6 Not bad if you like that sort of thing
7 A solid example of the genre
8 Very good indeed
9 An essential purchase
10 Unfeasibly perfect

High Lights

Timegate 50
Gabriel Knight II 54
Earthworm Jim 66
Chronomaster 72



Fantasy General

SSI/Mindscape

SSI's wargame Panzer General has been so successful that the company is currently adapting the game engine for use in a number of different scenarios. Called the Five Star Series, it will kick off with Allied General, a World War II game in which you can play the Brits, the Russians or the Americans. But the most interesting game in the series will be Fantasy General, a marriage between the traditional wargame and table-top fantasy battle sims. It uses Panzer's hex-based battlefield, but instead of Krauts and Tommys, you can play different characters who each have their own armies of monsters, knights and magic wielders, plus magic items to use and heroes to recruit. It does away with all the boring technical details (such as supply lines) normally found in wargames, focusing instead on the conflict itself. Fantasy fans should enjoy it, and it will also appeal to anyone who fancies getting into strategy games but has so far been put off by traditional scenarios and dull graphics. Fantasy General is released in March, and also keep an eye out for Star General, based on the same engine but set in space, which is due to appear around October.

▲ It's still hex-based, but Fantasy General offers a nice alternative to tanks and planes.

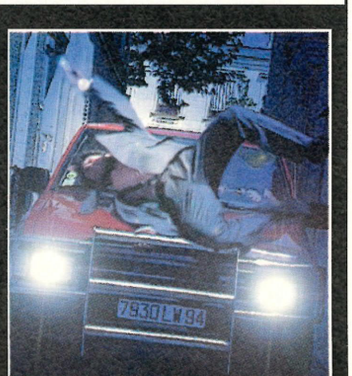
One to Watch...

Urban Runner

Sierra

Described by Sierra as the first 100 per cent full-screen video adventure, Urban Runner is a Hitchcock-style thriller which starts with a murder and continues with kidnappings, chases and plenty of intrigue. The main character is Max Gardner, an investigative reporter whose life is threatened when he comes across a roll of film showing an industrialist in a compromising position. Unfortunately for Max, the industrialist turns up dead in a sauna before he has a chance to blackmail him, and it all goes horribly pear-shaped... The game features all the usual dialogue and puzzles, and although it doesn't give players complete freedom to do what they want, it does offer a high level of interaction. Oh, and the graphics are pretty good as well. Look out for it in March.

That'll teach the buggers not to try and wash my windscreen when I'm stuck at the lights. Urban Runner claims to be the first 100% video game. ▶

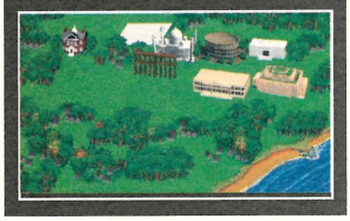


One to Watch...

Civilization II

MicroProse

Sid Meier's Civilization was the godfather of god games. The aim was to evolve your Stone Age tribe into 21st Century space travellers through research, exploration, trade and the ruthless termination of rival empires — a concept that proved irresistible to a huge number of gamers. Civilization 2 is based around the same idea — but the vastly improved isometric graphics will appeal to anyone who was put off by the original's basic look. Pre-set scenarios provide an additional challenge, and gamers will have to cope with historical events such as the advent of the Roman Empire and World War II. Out in March.



DeathKeep

SSI/Mindscape

Also from SSI is DeathKeep, a 3D role-playing game in which you're obliged to fight, leap and fly your way through 25, eight-floor dungeons in order to defeat a stray necromancer. That's one hell of a big game, and with 27 different monsters and a whole load of nasty traps, it should keep you busy for some time.



Magic the Gathering

MicroProse

Anorak attack! Magic the Gathering is a cult card game which has sold over 500 million copies worldwide, and has now been converted to PC. Produced by Sid Meier, it's all about fighting with magic, but to earn spells you must collect, buy, sell and trade spell cards with other players. We await with baited breath.



Six of the Best

PC Review introduces the best games of the last three months

Worms



Team 17/Ocean
£29.99
Rated 9
Issue 51

Still an office favourite, Worms is just brilliant. Use your team of gun-toting worms to blast the opposition off the screen — the most fun you'll ever have with anything pink and hard.

Actua Soccer



Gremlin Interactive
£34.99
Rated 9
Issue 51

The ultimate in action footy games, with stunning motion captured graphics and great playability.

Battle Cruiser 3000AD



GameTek
£39.99
Rated 9
Issue 52

Take charge of your very own Battlestar Galactica-style cruiser and conquer space in this huge, rewarding and thoroughly excellent space sim.

Earthworm Jim



Activision
£29.99
Rated 9
Issue 53

Shiny Entertainment's console smash hit has been translated perfectly to the PC. This is simply the best platform game ever, and offers hours of challenging fun as you manipulate your worm.

Chronomaster



US Gold
£39.99
Rated 9
Issue 53

The late Roger Zelazny penned the storyline for what has to be one of the most original adventures of the year. Superbly produced, atmospheric and thought-provoking.

The Beast Within



Sierra On-line
£44.99
Rated 8
Issue 53

The second Gabriel Knight adventure sees our supernatural sleuth transplanted to Germany where he must do battle with werewolves.

GALLUP PC CHARTS

CD-ROM

TM	LM	TITLE	BY	CHANGE
1	1	Encarta 96	Microsoft	■
2	3	Screamer	Virgin	▲
3	5	Command & Conquer	Virgin	▲
4	6	Worms	Team 17/Ocean	▲
5	2	Rebel Assault 2	LucasArts/Virgin	▼
6	4	FIFA Soccer 96	Electronic Arts	▼
7	16	The 7th Guest	White Label	▲
8	8	Championship Manager 2	Domark	■
9	14	Flight Simulator 5.1	Microsoft	▲
10	13	Actua Soccer	Gremlin	▲
11	7	TFX: EF2000	DID/Ocean	▼
12	12	Destruction Derby	Sony Interactive	■
13	10	Rebel Assault	White Label	▼
14	9	The Dig	LucasArts/Virgin	▼
15	11	The 11th Hour	Virgin	▼
16	15	Star Trek TNG	MicroProse	▼
17	-	Grand Prix Manager	MicroProse	✪
18	-	Warcraft 2	Blizzard/Zablac	✪
19	18	Day of the Tentacle	White Label	▼
20	-	Sim City	White Label	✪

ALL-FORMATS FULL PRICE

1	3	Worms	Team 17/Ocean	▲
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KEY: TM = THIS MONTH, LM = LAST MONTH

UP = ▲ DOWN = ▼ NO CHANGE = ■ NEW ENTRY = ✪ RE-ENTRY = ✳

Publisher: Activision
Contact: (0181) 742 9400
Price: TBA
Expected Release: March 1996

Rendered Speechless

ZORK NEMESIS: In Progress

As Activision resurrects Zork yet again, Cal Jones finds herself spirited away to a world of mystery and murder.

Back in ye olden days of computing, when men were men and graphics were unheard of, a text adventure called Zork arrived on the scene and gained a whole legion of fans. Sequels followed in the form of Zork II, Zork III, Beyond Zork and Zork Zero, but unfortunately the series died a death when its publisher, Infocom, went under.

Years later, Zork was reborn under the auspices of Activision. Back in the early eighties, players had to imagine the world of Zork for themselves, aided only by clues in the text, but in Return to Zork, Activision recreated it successfully as a full colour, all singing, all dancing graphic adventure complete with rendered scenery and digitised actors. It sold over a million copies worldwide.

Even so, not everyone was happy. Some of the Zork purists were annoyed by over-the-top performances from the actors who starred in the game, but if Return to Zork alienated any of the original devotees, it gained plenty more in the form of new PC owners who were attracted to the game by its flashy graphics.

New Zork

Now Activision is preparing to launch a follow-up, Zork Nemesis. Early versions of the game promise much, for not only is this one of the most picturesque adventures ever to grace a PC, but the camped-up acting of Return has been toned down in favour of superior plot progression and a more haunting and evocative atmosphere. If Activision delivers what it promises, then Zork Nemesis should please both the fans of the original text adventures and those who are swayed by the immediate appeal of spectacular visuals and atmospheric music. No doubt about it, this game has the potential to be brilliant. And with Activision spending over $3 million on the production budget, it had better be.

The plot harks back to the old text games, with the player taking the role of the nameless adventurer in the original series. You start your journey outside a derelict temple, where you find four trapped souls which claim they are being tormented by an entity known as the Nemesis. When you question them, you discover that they were once alchemists who were on the verge of discovering the secret of eternal life when the Nemesis murdered them. They implore you to free them by helping them regain control over the elements they control: earth, air, fire and water. The Nemesis has hidden these elements in the temple, but as you explore, you soon find out that the alchemists' tales are not exactly accurate, and you have to decide who to believe.

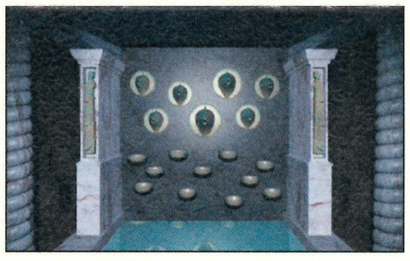
Zork scratchings

Activision has employed plenty of Hollywood talent to make Zork Nemesis an experience not to be missed. The screenplay was written by Edith Swensen, who was responsible for Star Trek: The Next Generation, and Mauro Borrelli, who worked on Batman Forever, Bram Stoker's Dracula and The Godfather III, was brought in to direct the visuals.

The first thing you'll notice about the game

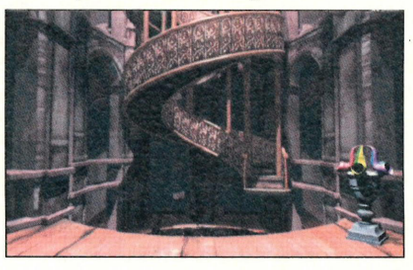


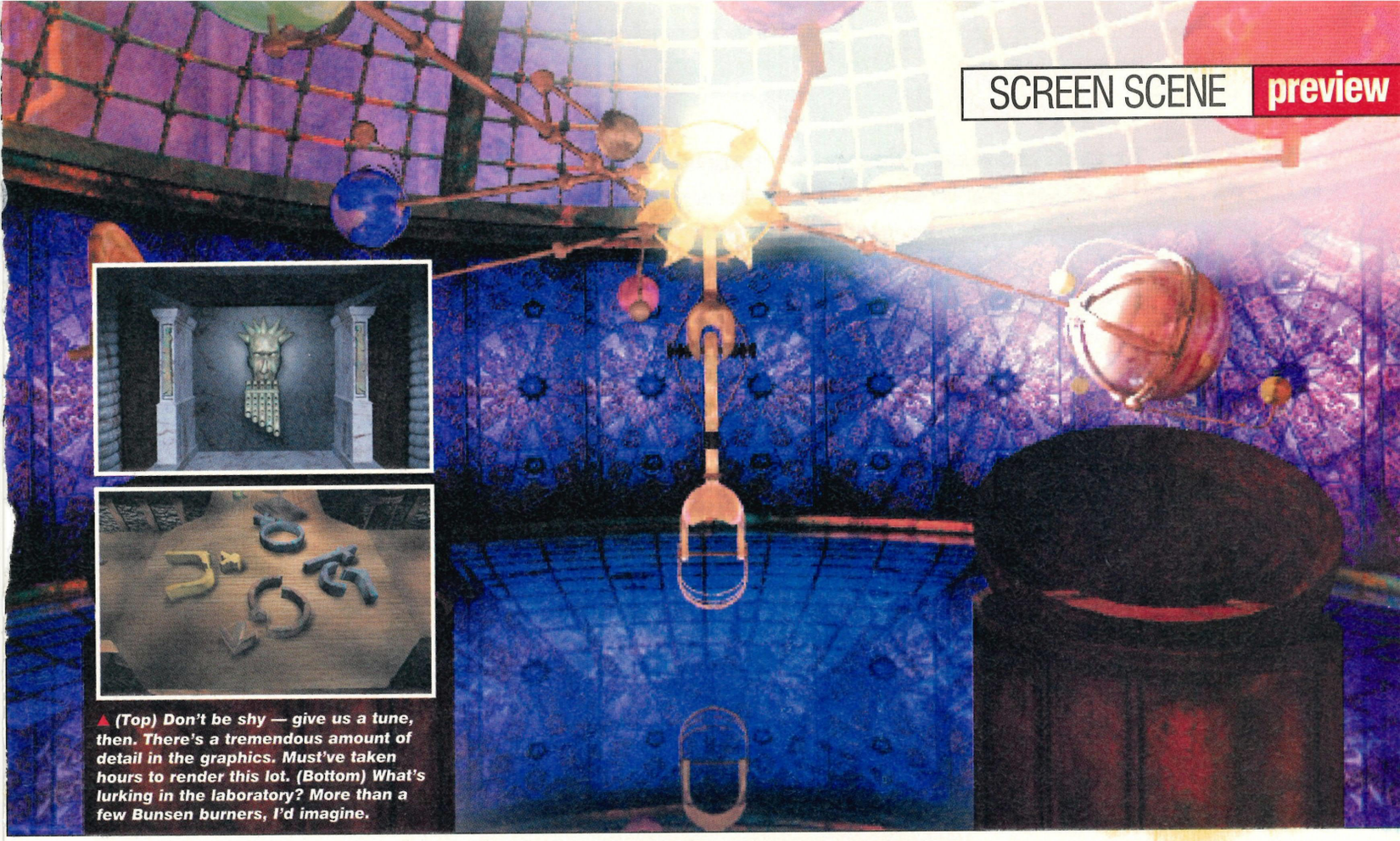
▲ *The monastery is one of the many spectacular locations you'll visit. Exploration is vital to your progress, but with graphics as good as these, it's hardly a chore.*



▲ *A fountain, apparently, although it looks like a collection of urinals to me.*

▼ *Activision's new Z-Vision game engine allows you to rotate your view through 360 degrees — something that even Myst couldn't manage.*



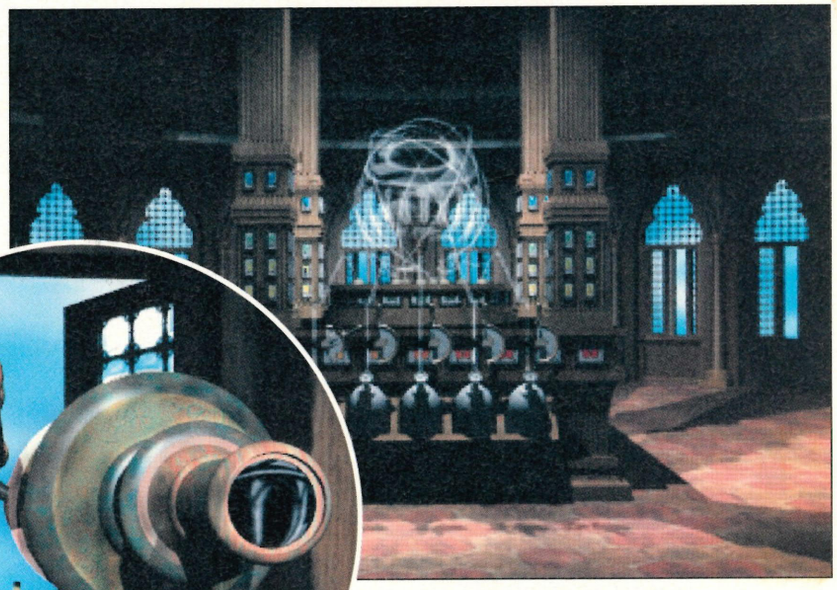


▲ *(Top) Don't be shy — give us a tune, then. There's a tremendous amount of detail in the graphics. Must've taken hours to render this lot. (Bottom) What's lurking in the laboratory? More than a few Bunsen burners, I'd imagine.*

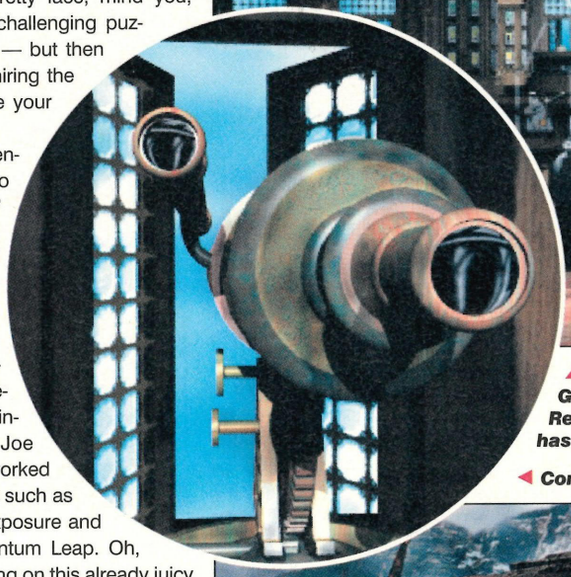
is how good it looks. The Myst-style rendered graphics are truly amazing, but unlike Myst, the player has more freedom of movement and can pan around 360 degrees. With six different worlds to visit, including a gothic temple, castle, asylum, monastery, conservatory and the Nemesis' inner sanctum, you'll have plenty of opportunity for rubber-necking. Zork Nemesis isn't just a pretty face, mind you, because there are 35 challenging puzzles to keep you busy — but then there's no harm in admiring the scenery as you engage your grey matter.

In addition to the rendered graphics, it also includes 50 minutes' worth of live action video sequences featuring the characters you'll meet during the game. These were filmed using professional actors, and were created by Emmy Award-winning director Joe Napolitano, who has worked on cult TV programmes such as the X-Files, Northern Exposure and that old favourite, Quantum Leap. Oh, and there's yet more icing on this already juicy cake in the form of a fantastically atmospheric soundtrack created by Academy Award winning studio Soundelux Media Labs (which worked on the soundtracks for JFK and Cliffhanger, amongst others).

With credentials like these, it's hard to imagine how Zork Nemesis could possibly fail. My guess is that it will do extremely well — but the proof of the pudding, as they say, is in the eating. Either way, Zork Nemesis will provide us with a real feast on its release in March.



▲ *The graphics in Zork Nemesis are extraordinary. OK, so rendered adventures are two-a-penny these days, but even so, Nemesis is special.*



▲ *The locations were created on Silicon Graphics workstations by 3D modelling experts Rez.n8, whose work on movies such as StarGate has won critical acclaim.*

◀ *Come on, who put boot polish round the eyepiece?*



▲ *The game contains no less than 35 puzzles, and takes, on average, 40 hours to complete. Sounds about right to me.*



▲ *There's a strong astronomy theme running throughout the game — this mosaic could provide you with valuable clues.*

Wanted: Traditional hero — experience in swashbuckling a must. Kate Russell buckled her swashes and got to work.

Chronicles of the Sword: In Progress

Swordplay

Publisher: Sony Interactive
Contact: (0151) 282 3000
Price: TBA
Release date: March 1996

King Arthur and the knights of the Round Table. Fact or fiction? That's one thing no-one will ever really know. We know there was an Arthur, and there may even have been a Merlin. But as for the rest, that's subject to an enormous amount of speculation.

It has also been the subject of countless computer games, although most of these have been based on only the vaguest, most romantic interpretations of the Arthurian legend. Chronicles of the Sword, however, intends to put this right.

The game is set in approximately 400AD, and developer Synthetic Dimensions claims that it's as true to life as is possible. The programmers do admit to a certain amount of artistic license, however. For instance, in that era the legendary Camelot would actually have been built from wood, and the evil witch Morgana was, in fact, one of the good guys. But as the Chronicles of the Sword team point out, "a shed on top of a mud pie with some OK woman in a long frock," wouldn't have had quite the same impact.

You play Sir Gawain, eldest son of the King of Orkney, who arrives at Camelot to find himself embroiled in the plans of the evil witch Morgana. The survival of Arthur and the fate of Camelot lies in your hands, and the only question is... Are you up to it?

An impressive 3D rendered environment provides an excellent setting for the adventure, thanks to some stunning effects which have been created using new techniques devised by the programmers. Head of the team, Kevin Bulmer, makes some lofty claims about his game. "People will be astonished by the sound and graphics alike. All the graphics have been ray-traced giving an unprecedented level of detail." Normally you'd be tempted to dismiss this as so much hot air, but one look at the screenshots on this page will tell you that the game does indeed look pretty special.

In addition to the game itself, Synthetic Dimensions has managed to pack 1.7 gigabytes of audio onto two CDs. There are over 5,000 lines of dialogue and many wonderful ambient sound effects, all of which add to the game's superb atmosphere. As Bulmer puts it, "There's an awful lot of people who are going to be surprised by what this game shows is possible".

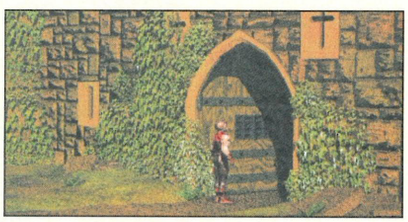
Er, quite.



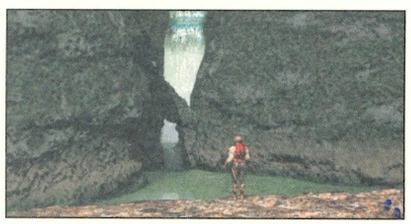
▲ *It's a table and it's round. Er, it's the Round Table, then.*



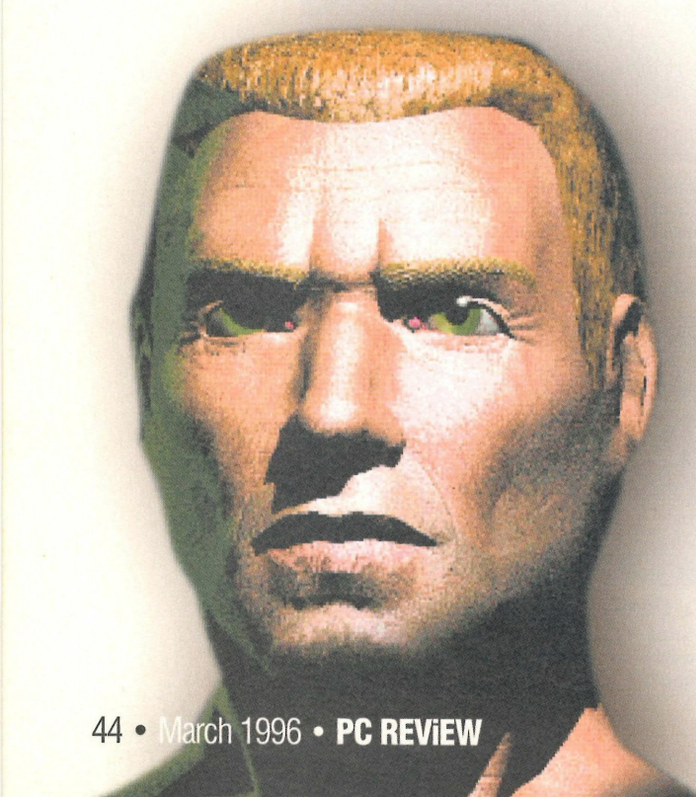
▶ *Put that sword down — you might hurt yourself!*



▲ *The mythical Tintagel — one of the many picturesque locations you'll see.*



▲ *Hmm, I wonder if there's a secret cave hidden behind that waterfall?*



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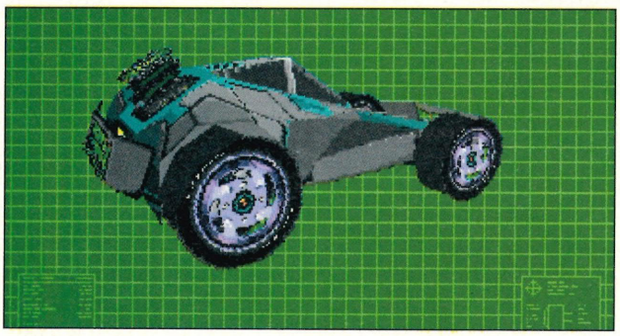
Track Attack: In Progress

Microprose in racing game shocker? Rik Henderson gets a sneak preview of a genre that the company from Chipping Sodbury has never touched before — sheah right!

Let's face it, Microprose is hardly renowned for steering clear of car racing games (pun entirely intended). But then every one we've seen to date has generally been the absolutely best of its type. The games have also, in every instant, been heralded as true simulations of their subject matter. So now it seems as if the time is right to produce an arcade racing game, especially after the successes of Screamer and Fatal Racing, and the complete botch-job made of Wipe Out — and why shouldn't the big 'M' use its expertise in the genre to great effect in this (not-so) little corner of the market — after all Armitage Shanks still makes toilets, just better ones each year.

Track Attack borrows more from Wipe Out and High Octane than Screamer and the other Ridge Racer-a-likes. For a start it's futuristic, with twisty turny roads, curved banks and the like. Plus there's pick-ups along the route that can aid your performance, jumps that propel you into the air, and the whole kit and caboodle uses 3D rendered graphics that move around at great speed. One major difference though, is that Track Attack keeps its wheels firmly on the ground, there's none of those namby pampy 'hover vehicles' here, nope we're talking dragster-like four-wheelers that burn rubber like no other.





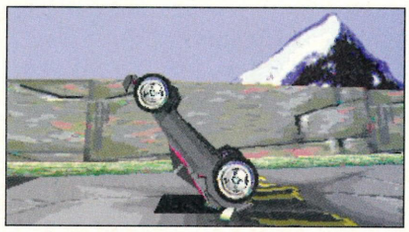
▼ *Each car is rendered in complete, rotational 3D.*

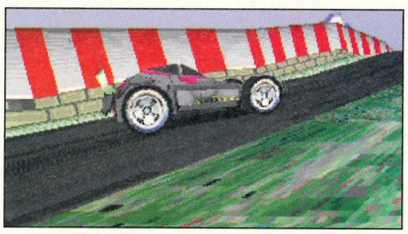
On the right track

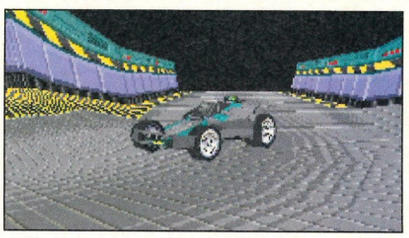
This game, when originally touted, had a working title of Ram Racer, and it's easy to see why that was changed. For a start there's no Dixon's shop windows in it for the plundering thereof (not that we endorse such an activity), and secondly there was no hint of the game's proffered main feature. You see, what makes Track Attack truly different from other arcade racers is that the tracks you race on (and there are 13 of them in total) morph during the game. They can change shape; open up short cuts; introduce barriers, catapaults, oil spills, fires and all sorts of obstacles; all making for an enormous variety in play — and this is every time you actually enter a race.

Then there's the vital ingredient that most games today can not get away with omitting; network play. Up to four machines can be linked up, allowing for human opponents which, although there are 15 computer-controlled drivers in the game, certainly spices up the action somewhat. And seeing as you can throw your car all over the place (á la Destruction Derby), this option is as vital as putting cars in the game in the first place.

Track Attack has a lot to live up to. Microprose's record in driving games is as immaculate as the Pope's driving licence, and the games already out on the shelves are going to take some beating.







SONGS WITH CARS IN THEM...

Cars — Gary Numan
"Here in my car..." sang Gazza, although he much preferred aeroplanes and even owned one himself. He crashed it though.

Baby You Can Drive My Car — The Beatles
Not only a great song in its own right, but the centrepiece for the 1980s sensation, Stars On 45. Yes.

Drive — The Cars
"Whose gonna drive you home... tonight?" Not you mate, you warbling, dull little man. At least the name of the band fits too though.

Little Red Corvette — Prince
Prince's red Corvette would have to be blimmin' little. A Matchbox toy version would probably do.

I Like Driving In My Car — Madness
The best of the car-related musical efforts. Not only is it about Muswell Hill (just up the road from where I live), but they quite proudly admit that it's fun to drive a rust-bucket.

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FIRST LEG - PC CD-ROM

ACTUA vs FIFA



"Without doubt the best footie game on the PC... A real FIFA beater." **PC ZONE**

ACTUA 92% **FIFA 84%**

"Yes. Actua Soccer is better than FIFA 96." **PC ANSWERS**

ACTUA 91% **FIFA 88%**



"A slick, fluid footer sim which rides the challenge of FIFA, slotting it calmly in the corner." **PC GAMER**

ACTUA 83% **FIFA 79%**



"FIFA 96...is overshadowed by Actua Soccer. EA must by now be throwing darts at pictures of the Gremlin development team. Better luck next year!" **UFG**

ACTUA 89% **FIFA 82%**



"Beats FIFA 96 to the top of the league." **C&VG**

ACTUA 93% **FIFA 91%**

"Actua Soccer is better than FIFA 96 – FACT!" **GAMEPRO**

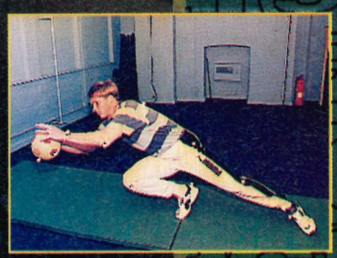
ACTUA 92% **FIFA 92%**

FINAL SCORE

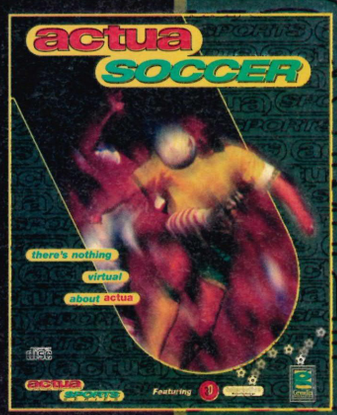
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SECOND LEG - PLAYSTATION

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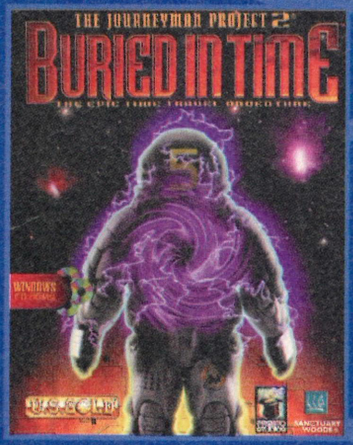
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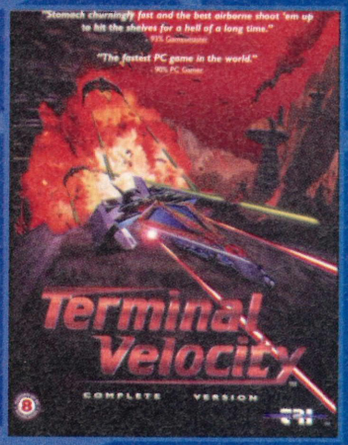
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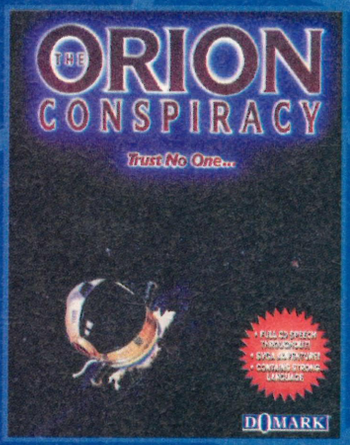
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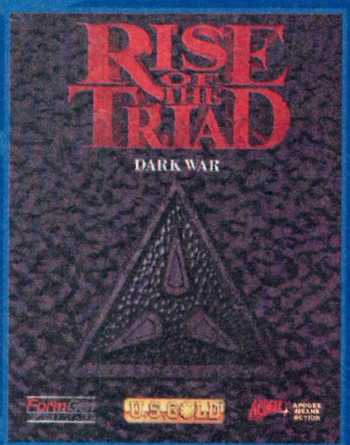
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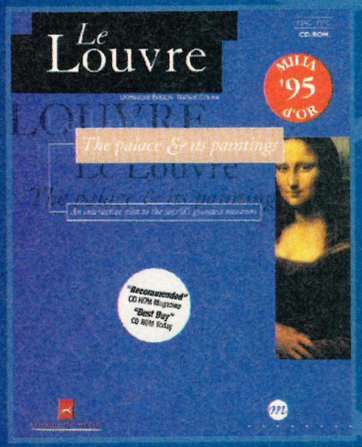
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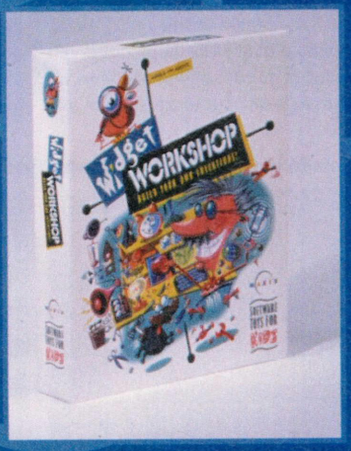
▲ TWINPACK: Mega Ace/Bloodnet (Cert 18) CD Telstar
Minimum requirements: 386DX, 4Mb RAM, VGA



▲ TWINPACK: Syndicate/UFO CD Telstar
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Lose all your hit points and little Will kicks the bucket. Guzzle down the refreshing elixir to restore energy or, if the worst comes to the worst, you could load a previously saved game.

Time Gate

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 33Mhz

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Soundblaster and comp

The odds are against Alex Simmons as he discovers Infogrames' Knights Templar in this new, time-jumping graphic adventure.

Having a distinct style is definitely a good thing. It makes something instantly recognisable, whether it's the latest single from pop-meisters Blur or Vic and Bob's latest television show. Infogrames' has created its own style too, with much of it being based upon the hugely-popular Alone in the Dark games. Now, after three critically-acclaimed chapters in the series, the French software house has taken a slightly different approach to its new 3D arcade adventure, Time Gate.

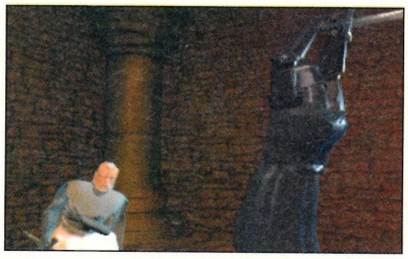
Supernatural super sleuth Edward Carnby has been laid to rest, making way for fresh-faced William Tibbs, a troubled student studying law in the love capital of the world, Paris. Like Carnby before him, Tibbs is plunged into an adventure full of murder and mystery where success is a matter of life and death. Not just his own demise either, as Tibbs' fiancee has been kidnapped. However, Juliette's captor isn't the usual gun-crazy thug demanding wads of cash for her safe return. He's considerably more powerful and is also a lot older. About 650 years older to be precise! Juliette has been kidnapped by Wolfram, a mediaeval lord who's sold his soul to the devil and is using his dark powers to wreak havoc through the ages.

French connection

William Tibbs begins the game inside Gallois, a 14th century gaol in which Juliette is being held. There is, however, one small problem. The game opens with little Willy living in 1995, but Juliette has been taken back to the year 1329. Tibbs must fathom out a way of travelling through time in order to knock off Satan's sidekick and then return victorious to the 20th Century with the gorgeous Juliette in his arms. Easy, huh?

Well no, it's not easy at all. Like the Alone in the Dark games, Time Gate is chock full of complex puzzles, as well as a hefty chunk of slice 'n' dice sword play. Therefore Tibbs' grey matter must be as strong as his sword-arm as

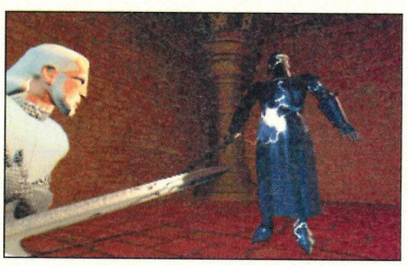
Back to the future



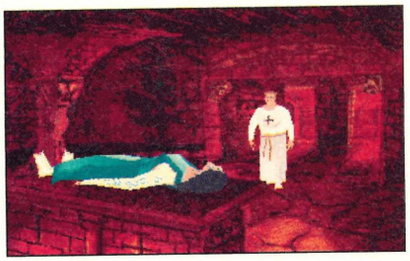
▲ *As the game opens, the wounded Templar knight falls to the ground, with a gash in his chest. The Dark Knight raises his sword to finish the old man...*



▲ *Summoning every last bit of energy, the Templar raises his long sword, levels it at his opponent and skewers the prone warrior through the stomach.*



▲ *In a blinding flash of light the Black Knight disappears. Where did he go? Evil magic is afoot, but who's casting the spells? Meanwhile...*



▲ *At last, it's Juliette! Mind you, she's looks pretty dodgy at the moment. Are those blue marks dodgy tattoos or has your beloved caught some kind of disease? Erk!*

relying on deft lunge and thrusts will only get him so far in the game.

Time Gate is presented in much the same way as the Alone trilogy, with the action viewed from various camera angles that automatically switch as Tibbs moves through the game. While the static background graphics are convincing enough, they lack animated objects that would bring them to life and therefore some of the scenes are flat and two dimensional. The characters, on the other hand, are constructed of Gouraud-shaded polygons and move fairly realistically. Up close faces are detailed and clothes are textured, but from a distance they become blocky and any definition is lost. Considering texture-mapped characters were used to such great effect in BioForge, similar techniques would have made Time Gate visually more striking. As it stands, Time Gate is not much of an improvement over Alone in the Dark 3, but then there's more than enough people out there that'll think that's a good thing.

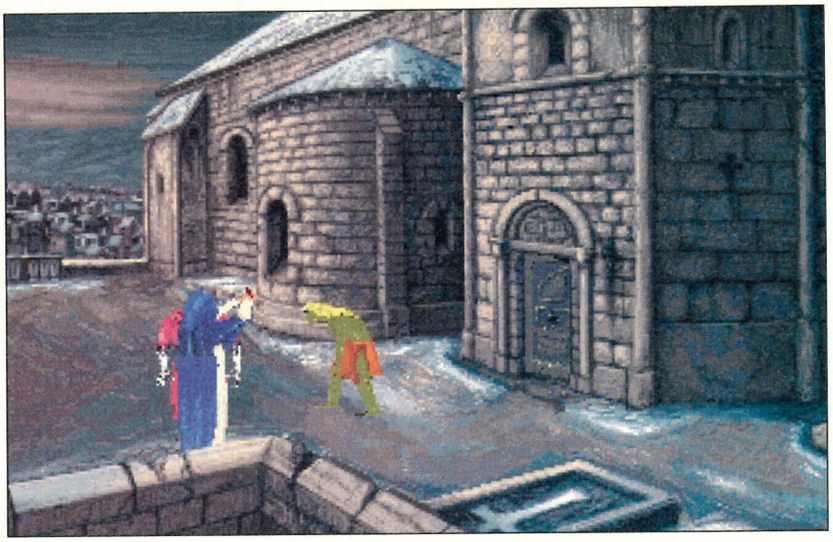
Action stations

As for the game itself, it's a set formula for an adventure of this style. The player has complete control over Tibbs, who is free to move anywhere using the cursor keys. As well as walking, there's the option to run which is useful for dodging enemies or just speeding up the game when its just a case of plodding around aimlessly.

Tibbs can interact with the background scenery and manipulate any objects of interest by calling up one of the three action commands. The default setting is unarmed combat, so holding the action key sends Tibbs in a whirling dervish of punches and kicks which are potentially lethal to anything wandering within arms' reach. Selecting the second action command allows Tibbs to push nearby objects. Apart from shoving heavy objects along the ground, this command is also used to nudge levers that often open secret passages leading to the next antichamber in Gallois.



◀ *Many of the puzzles are solved by combining objects. For example, Tibbs must create a sleeping potion by mixing together ingredients found in the herbalists' room.*

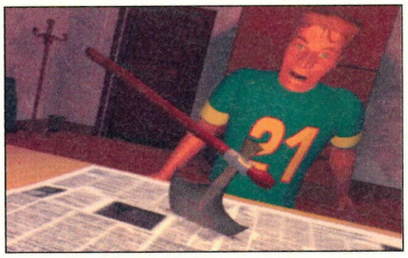


▲ *Out on the castle roof, the graveyard is haunted by zombies. While the undead creature can be killed with the sword, the green monsters can only be defeated by showing it the wooden crucifix.*

The last action command is mainly used for exploration, and allows Tibbs to either search the immediate area for anything of interest or alternatively open a nearby chest or cupboard. If any objects are found, Tibbs has the option to stash them in his limitless inventory or simply discard them. Unsurprisingly most items found in the game have some use, so wise adventurers will nick everything that isn't nailed down just in case it might be needed later in the quest.

Each item stored in Tibbs' inventory has its own menu of action commands too, relating directly to the object. For example, a 'drink' option will appear when highlighting a bottle of wine while the remote-controlled catapult (!) can be either reloaded or fired.

Continued over ▶



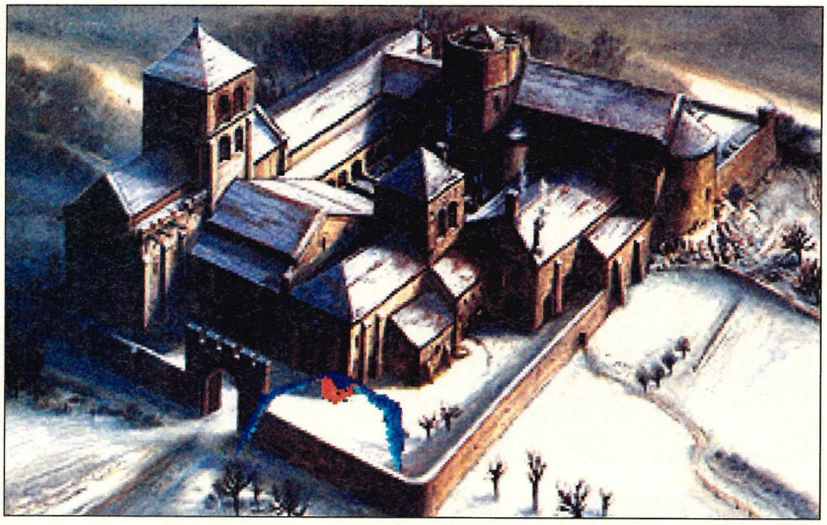
▲ *Back to 1995, law student William Tibbs is studying in his tiny room when suddenly an axe crashes through the window and sticks into the desk.*



▲ *Seconds later the Black knight materialises in William's room, his eyes glowing red. This guy obviously isn't here just to collect this month's rent...*



▲ *Tibbs hurls the axe at the knight, striking his chest, leaving behind a hologram, a ring and the question of just what the hell is going on?!*



Gallois, 1329. The French stronghold is a fairly small in size, but there are still loads of locations for Tibbs to explore. At least running everywhere speeds things up a little.



Once inside the castle Tibbs must disguise himself as a monk to avoid the watching eyes of the guard. Follow the priest in front carefully otherwise you'll be hung, drawn and quartered.

Bare-fist brawling

Combat, both armed and bare-fist fighting, takes up a sizable chunk of Time Gates' gameplay. Even when the game opens with the unarmed Tibbs wandering through Gallois in 1995, he must fight off fearsome black knights summoned by the mediaeval oppressor Wolfram. Until Tibbs finds a sword or other weapon, he's limited to a selection of weedy punches, kicks and headbutts. However, he becomes a more formidable opponent with a razor-sharp blade clasped in his hand and so the range of attacks increases to thrusts, swipes and hacks. However, while engaging the enemy with weapons cause more damage, Tibbs takes longer to recover from each blow and is therefore prone to attack. It's therefore better to stick with a decent left-hook against enemy's equipped with crossbows and any other form of rapid-reloading weapons.

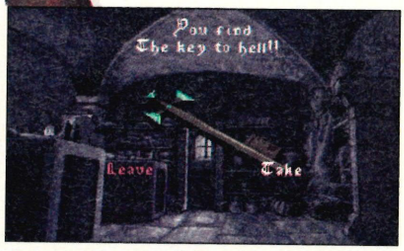
Mastering the basic techniques of combat is easy, but even so health and sometimes even battles are lost because, like in the Alone games, odd camera angles make it difficult to determine which direction Tibbs is facing. The enemy often get a free hack in because Tibbs is partially obscured by an object in the foreground and losing fights through no fault of your own is somewhat frustrating. Thankfully Will can sustain 10 hits before dying, and health can be restored by drinking elixir and eating food found throughout the castle. Of course, there's also the restore game option if all else fails.

Same old faces

But while Time Gate is, in theory at least, an exciting game, it's hardly original. Plot aside, Time Gate ***is*** Alone in the Dark with slightly better graphics, digitised speech and some okayish rendered cutscenes. The game is controlled in exactly the same way, the puzzles are structured pretty much identically and even Tibbs' combat attacks are the same as Edward Carnby's! Admittedly though this isn't too much of a problem, after all the former game set industry standards, but Time Gate could have been more than that. Infogrames had the chance to start afresh, with new characters, a compelling storyline and, above all, a much enhanced hybrid of the classic Alone in the Dark games. But as it stands, the plot is fairly innovative at times, with its time-travel angles and accurately researched slice of Mediaeval shenanigans and all in all it's still good fun to play. The Alone In The Dark series has just been released on a compilation (reviewed on page 97), and this is a worthy successor, and as unoriginal as it may be, it'll certainly keep Alone fans very happy indeed.



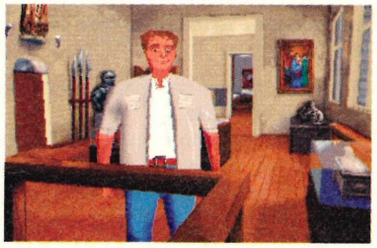
The guard on the rooftop cannot be defeated simply by pummelling him with the mace. Instead you must push him off the ledge by continually striking him down.



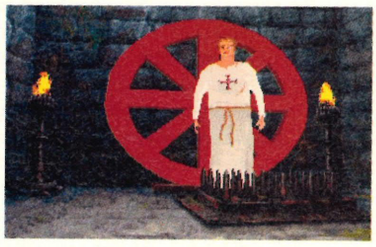
Any objects of interest automatically appear providing they're within reach of Tibbs, so thankfully you won't have to explore every corner to find vital objects needed later in the game.

CHANGING FACES

Mr Tibbs' attempts to rescue the lovely Juliet take him on a journey across time in which he will have to solve mysteries, overcome his enemies and ultimately, do battle with his fiancee's captor – the 650 year old evil lord Wolfram. No amount of monkey gland treatment can keep someone going that long – he's sold his soul to the devil and will use all of the dark powers at his disposal to thwart William's efforts.



The game opens in 1995, with disposable hero Tibbs wearing tatty jeans and a linen sweater from Top Man. Oh dear.



In the 14th Century William changes into an all-in-one robe complete with fashionable cross emblem on the chest.



And then he just goes over the top. Drawing on the power of Condorman or something, Tibbs changes into a giant bird. Yeah, right.

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Arcade Adventure*
Publisher: .....*Infogrames*
Price: *£44.99*
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Alone In The Dark 4 basically, but that's not a bad thing really.

8



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Gabriel Knight II: The Beast Within

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486 DX, DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster/Win comp.

Oh Gabriel, what big hair you've got! Cal Jones wolf-whistles Sierra's hunky hero as he stars in his very first interactive movie.

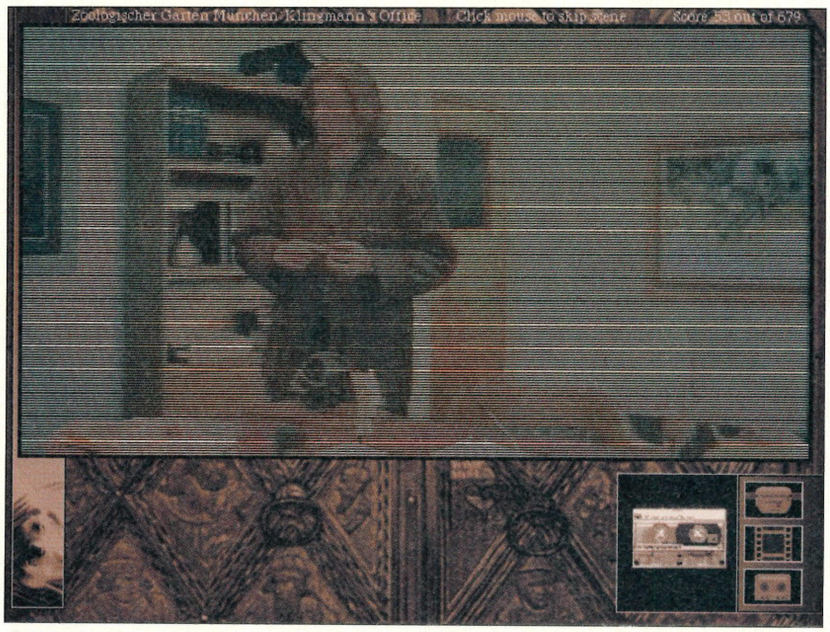
Two years ago, Gabriel Knight: Sins of the Fathers restored my faith in Sierra. After being drowned in the sugary sweetness of King's Quest and bored by the procedure of Police Quest, I was pleasantly surprised by the dark, adult tone of the first Gabriel adventure. Well, to say I was pleasantly surprised would be a bit of an understatement. I thought it was the best adventure I'd ever played. Not only was it extraordinarily well plotted but it also boasted attractive hand-drawn graphics and a wonderful soundtrack. I awarded it the coveted nine out of ten.

Set in New Orleans, the game followed pulp novelist Gabriel's attempts to unravel a series of voodoo-related murders. During the game, the orphaned Gabriel discovers that he's the last descendant of a German family whose male members had all been Schattenjagers (literally, shadow hunters), supernatural sleuths whose sole purpose in life was to put an end to all manner of occult nastiness.

At the start of The Beast Within, Gabriel has installed himself in his ancestral castle in southern Germany with his housekeeper Gerde, leaving his long suffering assistant Grace to look after the bookshop in New Orleans. As he tries to find the inspiration for a second novel, he is interrupted by the local villagers who want him to solve the murder of a young girl. She has been killed, they think, by a werewolf.

Feeling sceptical

Yet despite this promising start and the fact that I loved the first game to pieces, I was somewhat sceptical about this sequel. Why? Because Sierra had dispensed with the hand drawn graphics of the original and replaced them with digitised film footage. That's right, Gabriel Knight 2 is — an interactive movie.

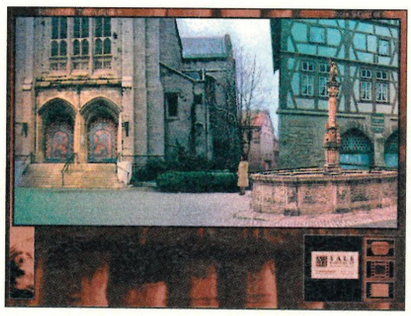


▲ *Whenever Gabriel does something important, such as using his tape recorder in a slightly less than legal manner, you'll be treated to a video cutscene. You can click past these if you wish.*

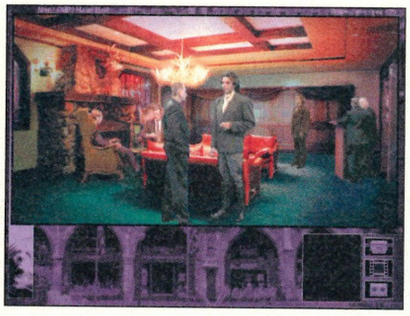
It's very similar in format to Phantasmagoria. The game is divided into days (each taking up one of the six CDs), and each day begins and ends with a short movie. Like Phantasmagoria, it's a point and click adventure, but every time you perform a certain action, you get a digitised cut-scene. It's this similarity between the two games that gave me cause for concern. Phantasmagoria, although visually impressive, was poor gameplay wise, and I was desperately hoping that Sierra hadn't made the same mistake with Gabriel Knight II.

Fortunately, this is an infinitely better game. For starters, it looks better. In Phantasmagoria, digitised actors were superimposed onto rendered backgrounds, making the characters stand out like a sore thumb. In this game, the backgrounds have also been digitised and the characters don't look quite so out of place.

Secondly, the actors can actually act. The guy who plays Gabriel may not have made it in Hollywood yet, but he does a good enough job here. Grace (a minor character in the first game) gets a bigger role this time too — you get to play her in alternate chapters as she tries to research facts which will help Gabriel on his



▲ *Grace in Gabriel's castle in Rittersburg — a village consisting of a pub, a post office and a church. Exciting stuff...not!*



▲ *Gabriel's going to have to do a lot of talking to get himself admitted to the exclusive hunting club.*



▲ *Once in the hunting club, Gabriel is invited to the forest-bound club lodge. But is he the hunter or the hunted?*

case. Grace is in love with the womanising Gabriel, and at first she's resentful that he's left her in New Orleans. She's also none too pleased when she turns up in Germany to find Gerde holding the fort, and immediately assumes that they're having an affair. There's some great acting in the scenes where the two women meet each other, with Grace reacting to Gerde's frosty reception with badly disguised bitchiness.

But the game itself is far better than Phantasmagoria. The plot develops well — you want to keep playing for that little bit longer to find out what happens next — and the puzzles are reasonably challenging. More importantly, you won't finish it in a day. There's enough to do to keep you occupied for at least a week, and that's playing all day, every day.

Grace and flavour

Unfortunately, the Grace chapters aren't quite as interesting as the Gabriel chapters. There are some good moments but day four, when Grace visits King Ludwig II's castles, looks at exhibits and listens to tour guides, is just a little bit boring at times.

I also found the puzzles a little less imaginative than in the original game, which is possibly due to the limitations of video. It's still very entertaining, but I didn't get to use my brain to quite the same extent this time around.

But overall, this is well worth playing. It has a cracking good plot, and that in itself should be enough to keep you going until the bitter end. This is, without doubt, the best interactive movie yet. Don't be sceptical about it just because it contains video — it's still excellent.

One word of warning, though. Sierra states that the minimum memory needed to run it is 8Mb, but I think 16Mb is more realistic — it's almost unplayable with less. The game also locked up on a few occasions, forcing me to reboot my PC. Whilst this could be a problem specific to my PC, I'd recommend you save regularly just in case.

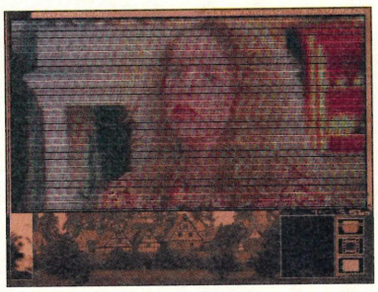
Character building



▲ *Gabriel writes trashy novels and fights the forces of darkness aided only by a medallion and the ability to talk the hind legs off a donkey.*



▲ *Gabriel's sidekick Grace has taken time out from running the bookshop in New Orleans to help him on his case — he wishes she'd stay out of it.*



▲ *Gerde is the housekeeper at Schloss Ritter, Gabriel's ancestral home. Grace is jealous of her, believing the pair are having a fling.*



▲ *Baron Von Glower runs the exclusive hunt club in Munich. He's very accommodating to Gabriel, and even loans our hero his date for the night.*



▲ *King Ludwig II of Bavaria spent his life building castles before being sent to the loony bin. Although long dead, he is somehow involved.*



▲ *A series of vicious murders were apparently caused by this werewolf. It's up to Gabby to uncover its human identity before it rips his throat out.*

A man has been torn to pieces in broad daylight, right in the middle of Munich. Can Gabriel sweet-talk the police chief to find out more? ▼



PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Graphic adventure*
Publisher:.....*Sierra*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact: .....*(01734) 303322*

Excellent and atmospheric, but loses momentum in places.

8





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PLAYSTATION PLUS

MARCH ISSUE ON SALE FEBRUARY 23RD



◀ *Even if you don't bother trying to control it, you'll still finish 4th or 5th every time. You must finish in the top three to qualify for the next race, though.*

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 DX4,Windows 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Soundblaster

Kate Russell strapped herself firmly into her chair to play CyberSpeed, but soon she was looking for the eject button.

With a multitude of high speed racing games making their way onto our PCs, games like Cyberpeed are going to have a tough time getting themselves noticed. Let's face it, there's some pretty stiff competition out there. With superb titles like Destruction Derby, Screamer and Fatal Racing still surfing the charts, would-be speedsters are spoilt for choice.

Following hot on the heels of Wipeout is the latest console conversion — CyberSpeed.

It's basically a 3D racing game, but instead of having full control over your vehicle, the cars dangle from an invisible beam which keeps them on track. Imagine riding the Nemesis at Alton Towers and you're halfway there — only you're in control of the accelerator. As with Wipeout, the sensation of speed hasn't quite come across on the PC conversion. It still moves reasonably fast on a decent machine, but don't even think about loading onto your 486 unless you want to be treated to a slow motion strobe effect as you attempt to play.



You get to choose your pilot before each race — you've got everything from thugs to bimbos. ▶

Hanging around

There are ten tracks and eight customised vehicles to chose from as you compete in a championship season. Dodging obstacles, collecting power-ups and blasting the daisies out of your opponents is the order of the day, but the power beam which keeps you on the course means that you really feel as though the work's being done for you. It's impossible to detach yourself from the beam (believe me, I tried) so the tendency is to jam your index finger on the accelerator button and let centrifugal force do the rest.

Actually it's a lot more involved than that, because taking the right degree of inclination on the corners can shave valuable seconds off your lap time. But personally, I'd prefer to be given the option of driving like a complete lunatic and burying my nose-cone in the central reservation. The lack of freedom is a real disappointment.

The in-game graphics are nice, and there are some genuinely funny cutscenes between races which feature TV adverts for futuristic household goods. These, however, are the only high point, because the gameplay itself just doesn't cut the mustard.

With so many great racing games out there I wouldn't want to spend good cash on CyberSpeed — unless, of course, I had shares in Mindscape or plan to build an attractive coffee table using racing game boxes.



▲ *CyberSpeed is Windows 95 only. You can run it in a window...*



▲ *...or as a full-size screen. It's not terribly exciting either way.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Arcade racing game*

Publisher: .....*Mindscape*

Price: *£44.99*

Contact: .....*(01444) 246333*

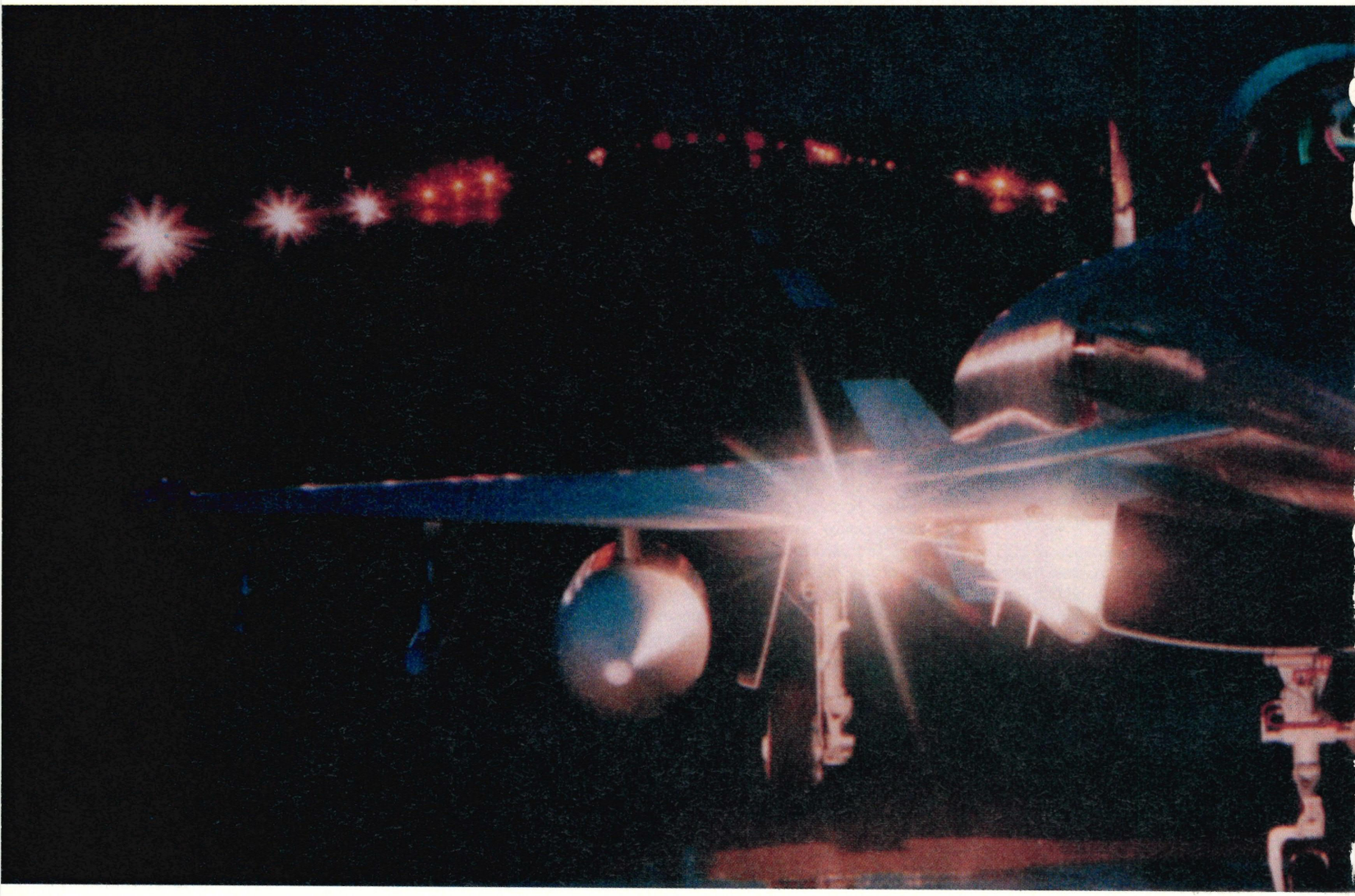
Interesting concept that failed miserably.

4



The spoof adverts which pop up between races are the best bit of the whole game. They'll make you laugh, but will you still be laughing when you realise you've spent 45 sovs on a dud game? ◀

"In 1940 Britain faced It must never happen



In 1940, Britain faced its darkest hour. It must never happen again.



The skies over Southern Britain were dark with the massed squadrons of enemy bombers and fighters. Defending our land were a handful of pilots flying round the clock - heroic, exhausting missions.

"Never was so much owed by so many to so few." Winston Churchill's famous speech heralded the victorious defeat of the enemy.

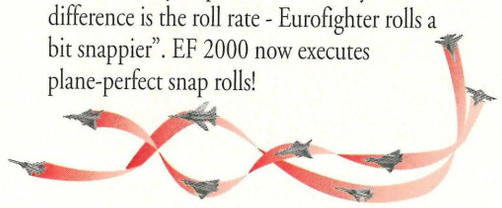
We had fighter planes in abundance, fuel, arms... everything necessary to meet the enemy on equal terms - yet we suffered from a chronic shortage of trained pilots.

It must never happen again.

And it won't.

Now you can experience, in ball-tingling, scrotum-tightening accuracy (sorry, ladies) exactly what it's like to fly the best fighter plane in the world - with the greatest PC flight sim in the world.

A Eurofighter test pilot who recently flew the sim was wildly impressed: "The only difference is the roll rate - Eurofighter rolls a bit snappier". EF 2000 now executes plane-perfect snap rolls!



The flight options are enormous.

Stooge around and just delight in the fluidity of the graphics and the beautiful map-accurate 4 million square kilometres of scenery. Or fly in-depth missions with breathtaking accuracy.

The AI controlled WarGen system reproduces a realistic combat environment, filling the skies with thousands of aircraft at any one time.

Or if you can't wait for some action, go to 'Quick Combat' (not for the faint-hearted!)

The accompanying flight manual is a treasure in its own right - giving an insight

TFX MILITARY

Officially the world's greatest

its darkest hour. again."

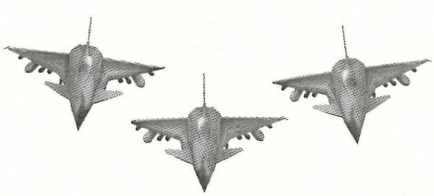
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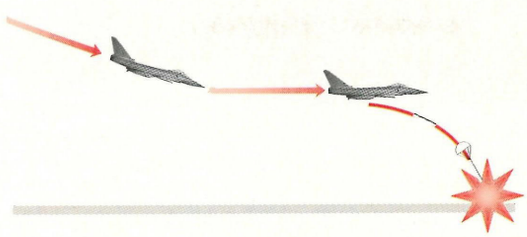
"QUITE SIMPLY THE MOST SOPHISTICATED PC FLIGHT SIM WE HAVE EVER SEEN. MAJESTIC."
(9/10 PC REVIEW)

into how, why and where the Eurofighter was developed. Every one of the Eurofighter's amazing attack, flight and defensive systems are faithfully simulated with incredible accuracy.



With networking capability for up to 8 pilots, wingmen at your command, mid-air refuelling, plus accurate plane and weapons performance, you're all set to take on and defeat the enemy.

Against the dreaded SU-35 - the best plane the enemy have - you have a slight combat edge, if you fly to your fullest ability. Don't and you're dead meat. SU27s, MiGs, transporters - over 30 different allied and enemy planes - fly in total realism. Ground targets abound - SAMs, gun emplacements, silos, ports, ships, troops, airfields - it's just too much.



TFX military EF2000 from Digital Image Design. Available on PC CD-ROM, it truly is the world's greatest flight sim.

Fly it, if you dare.



EF 2000

PC Combat flight sim.

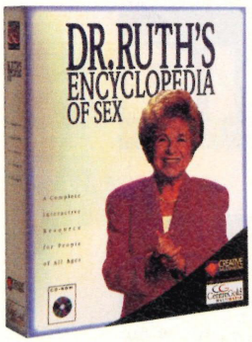
ocean

Tel: 0161 832 6633, Fax:0161 834 0650. e-mail: ef2000@did.com.

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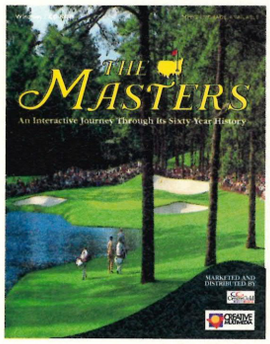
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Though film, sound, images and text, Dr. Ruth's Encyclopedia of Sex brings together all the knowledge one needs to be sexually literate in the 90's.
IBM/PC CD-ROM RRP £19.99



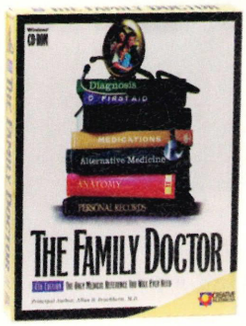
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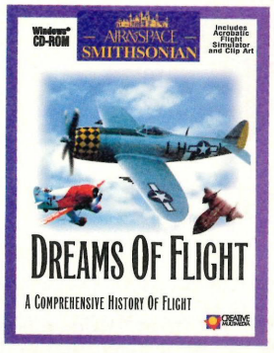
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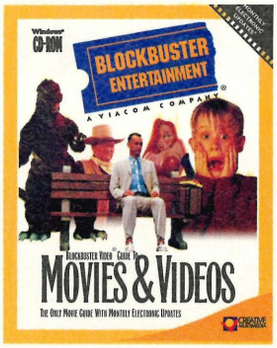


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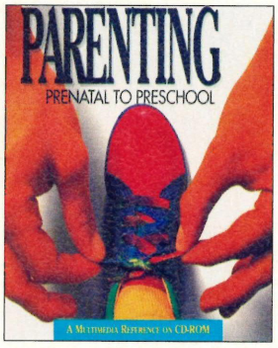
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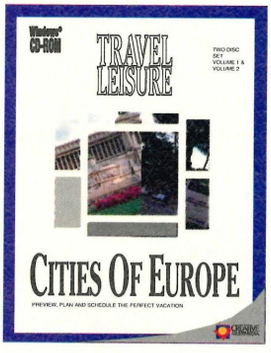
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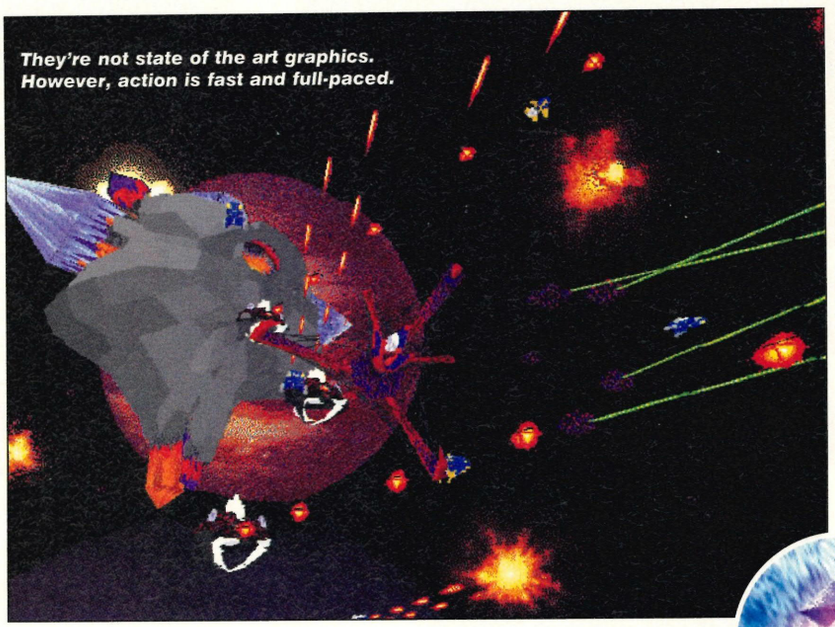
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Absolute Zero



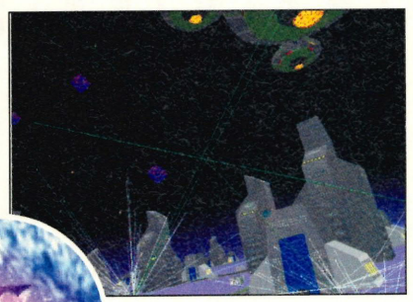
It's cold outside and lacking atmosphere. Cal Jones tries setting fire to a few aliens to keep herself warm.



They're not state of the art graphics. However, action is fast and full-paced.



◀ *Appearing later in the game, the Valkyrie hover bike is extremely fast and manoeuvrable — just don't fall off!*



◀ *There's nothing more gratifying than lots of big explosions — except when it's your side who's taking the damage.*





▲ *Turn the cockpit off if you don't want it getting in the way of the action.*

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486DX, MS-DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster

Imagine this: you're stuck on a mining colony on Europa, you're bored stupid and it's a wee bit too cold to pop outside for a spot of sunbathing and a glass of Pimms. Even the awesome sight of Jupiter hanging in the sky can't quite make up for the lack of good Terran beer, Haagen-Dazs and Baywatch. Not much fun, eh?

Then some idiot sinks his drill-bit way too deep into Europa's icy core. Well, how was he to know that a race of hostile aliens had been living there in suspended animation for the past few aeons? The aliens, not surprisingly, are none too chuffed at having had their beauty sleep disturbed and stumble out of bed to declare war on humanity. Great, you think, there's nothing like a war to wake you up.

All this, of course, is just an a excuse for a shoot 'em up. But Absolute Zero isn't just your traditional space-based blast. It has characters, it has plot and, most importantly of all, it has variety. The action is pretty much planet-based — some missions involve driving, while in others you have to zoom over Europa's surface, zapping the enemy. There's a number of different vehicles at your disposal, ranging from ground cars to hoverbikes, all differing in terms of speed, manoeuvrability, weapons and defensive strength. In some missions, you control only the gun turret while someone else drives, and this provides a gentle introduction to the controls and game style. On other missions, however, you control everything — and this is where hand-eye co-ordination comes in handy. Whether you're piloting a slow and cumbersome Maglock or a nippy but lightly armoured Valkyrie hoverbike, you always have to use your vehicle's strengths to maximum advantage whilst remaining aware of its weaknesses at all times.

No frills

Visually, the game is nothing special. The graphics are adequate, but if you're expecting some flashy, rendered confection, Absolute Zero will appear rather basic. It doesn't boast glamourous cutscenes — mission briefings are presented in text format with a voiceover, plus a map which shows you the location of your own troops, the enemy and any waypoints you have to fly through.

This no-frills approach works to a certain extent, although much of the early gameplay is really no more complicated than in visually superior games such as Rebel Assault and The Hive (though later missions are more involved). It's generally quite entertaining, but although it gives you the chance to pilot a variety of craft and play different characters, it doesn't boast any features that makes it stand out from the crowd. Better than average — but not a lot better.

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Space shoot 'em up*

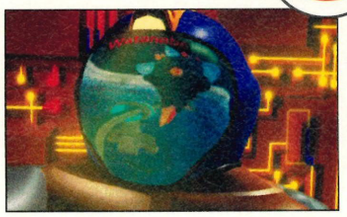
Publisher: .....*Domark*

Price: *£44.99*

Contact:.....*(0181) 780 2222*

Quite varied, but more workmanlike than stunning.

6





Warhammer: Shadow of the Horned Rat

CD ONLY
Minimum PC: 486DX2, Windows 95
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Windows comp soundcard

The epic struggle between Chaos and the Empire has finally come to the PC. Better late than never, says Gordon Houghton.

It's been a good month for wargame fans. Not (as they might wish) because the entire Earth is now populated by plastic mini-men at the mercy of dice-wielding control freaks, but because two excellent strategy games have been released. Warcraft II is more flexible and more fun, but Warhammer offers a significant tactical challenge to serious-minded players.

It also faithfully reproduces the rules, characters and atmosphere of the original tabletop game. This is good news for everyone who's spent hours pushing and pulling Citadel miniatures around a huge board on a Saturday afternoon, but I doubt if anyone else cares. Whichever side you're on, this is still a complex, rewarding game which will test all skill levels.

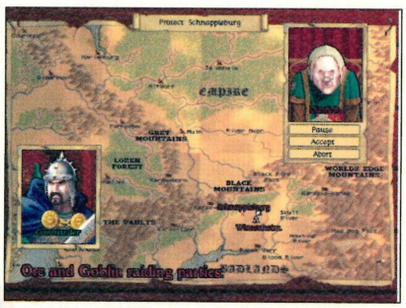
The manual weighs in at a wordy 120 pages, so if you're really keen you can discover the plot in detail for yourself. The basic story goes like this, however. The world of Warhammer is the setting for a feudal struggle between Chaos and Empire. You inhabit this world at a time when all the portents point to imminent death, doom, destruction and other nasty words beginning with 'd'. As the leader of the Grudgebringer army, your job is to champion mankind against the evil hordes.

So much for originality. The game itself involves around 40 realtime battles linked by animations and mission briefings, which together form one giant campaign. At the beginning you get a few easy and slightly tedious scenarios which allow you to build up your resources for the meaty and more interesting challenges later on. Eventually, you'll have earned enough cash to choose from around 25 troop types (which you can hire and fire at will), some nifty war machines and a few magic wielders. Naturally, your units will increase their abilities with success.

As you progress, the variety of terrain and characters increases. You find yourself fighting in towns and in the mountains, on plains and caravan routes — where you will encounter around 40 different kinds of elf, dwarf, Skaven (humanoid rats), orc, goblin and monster. Most of these are hostile, but some can be converted to your cause if you earn their respect in battle.

Battle prattle

The start of each encounter is almost always the same. After an animated briefing, you select your forces for the mission and go directly to the battlefield. Everything is controlled from one screen, and although the col-



▲ *Every mission is preceded by an animated briefing. Paymaster Dietrich provides most of the details and additional characters fill in the gaps.*



▲ *Once selected, your troops are taken straight to the battlefield. The task in the first mission is to defend the town of Schnappleburg against goblin attack.*



▲ *Having wiped out goblins in the north-east, your swordsmen and cavalry have responded to a second assault from the north. Unfortunately, you're too late...*



lection of icons and buttons is far from intuitive. It will provide you with a subtle degree of control which is very useful later on. Tactics aren't so crucial in the starter missions, but unit deployment, starting positions, formations and how you respond to attack soon become very important.

Once you've made your initial command decisions you can fiddle around with the camera controls to get the best view of the action. The battle graphics are stunning — both in normal and widescreen mode — but only if you have the right machine to cope with them. Gouraud shading, texture-mapping, animated scenery and full pixel resolution all create an impressive sense of realism. The sound is less appealing — it's not bad, but you can't help noticing that the background battle noise is a repeated loop broken only by speech or some serious development in the action.

Mission summary

Warhammer has plenty going for it. It's well presented, the action graphics are superb, there are a large and varied number of missions and the whole game captures the spirit of the tabletop original without having to endure the tedium of turn-based play.

Even so, I found it a tad limiting compared to Warcraft II. There is some freedom of choice in the campaign structure here but the game as a whole lacks flexibility. For example, you're stuck with one side from the beginning, there are no custom scenarios allowing you to set your own difficulty level, there's no two-player mode, and some of the missions are a little predictable.

Assuming you've got a Pentium, plenty of hard disk space and a tolerant attitude towards campaign-based games, this is one of the best-looking and most challenging strategy releases you'll find. But If you're running it on a DX2, be prepared to make substantial sacrifices — and subtract a mark from the rating below for the lack of speed.



TABLETOP TWINS

Warhammer's inspiration is a tabletop RPG which has been around for more years than a millipede has legs (well, almost). There are two main versions currently available, both created by Games Workshop: Warhammer (a traditional fantasy wargame), and Warhammer 40,000 (set in space and in the future). Both come complete with loads of scenarios and lots of dinky Citadel miniatures (which you paint yourself), and can be supplemented with extra rule books, new missions, DIY landscape features, expansion kits... and on and on until you're broke and have no sensible means of communicating with the outside world.

Games Workshop also does a range of fantasy board games which you might consider less nerdy, including Space Crusade (a futuristic wargame), Blood Bowl (American Football with fantasy teams), and Talisman (an excellent, no-hassle RPG).





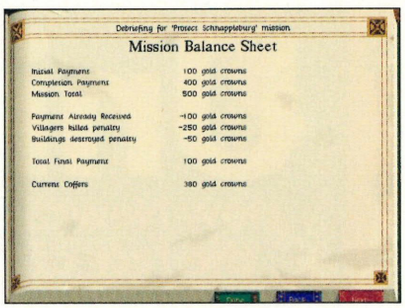
▲ *Running Warhammer on the minimum spec machine, this is the speediest graphics mode. It's also the worst — you can hardly see what's happening.*



▲ *A special 'no map' widescreen view is also available for people who can laugh in the face of death and tweak the noses of marauding orcs.*



▲ *The goblins are dead, the village is in flames and many of the locals have been hacked into pieces. No washing powder will get those blood stains out.*



▲ *Your reward for this mission is not all it should have been. You can try again or move onto the next scenario — escorting a nobleman to a nearby town.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Role-playing*
Publisher: *Mindscape*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact: *(01444) 246333*

A good conversion, but limited in scope.

7



From The Makers Of FHM

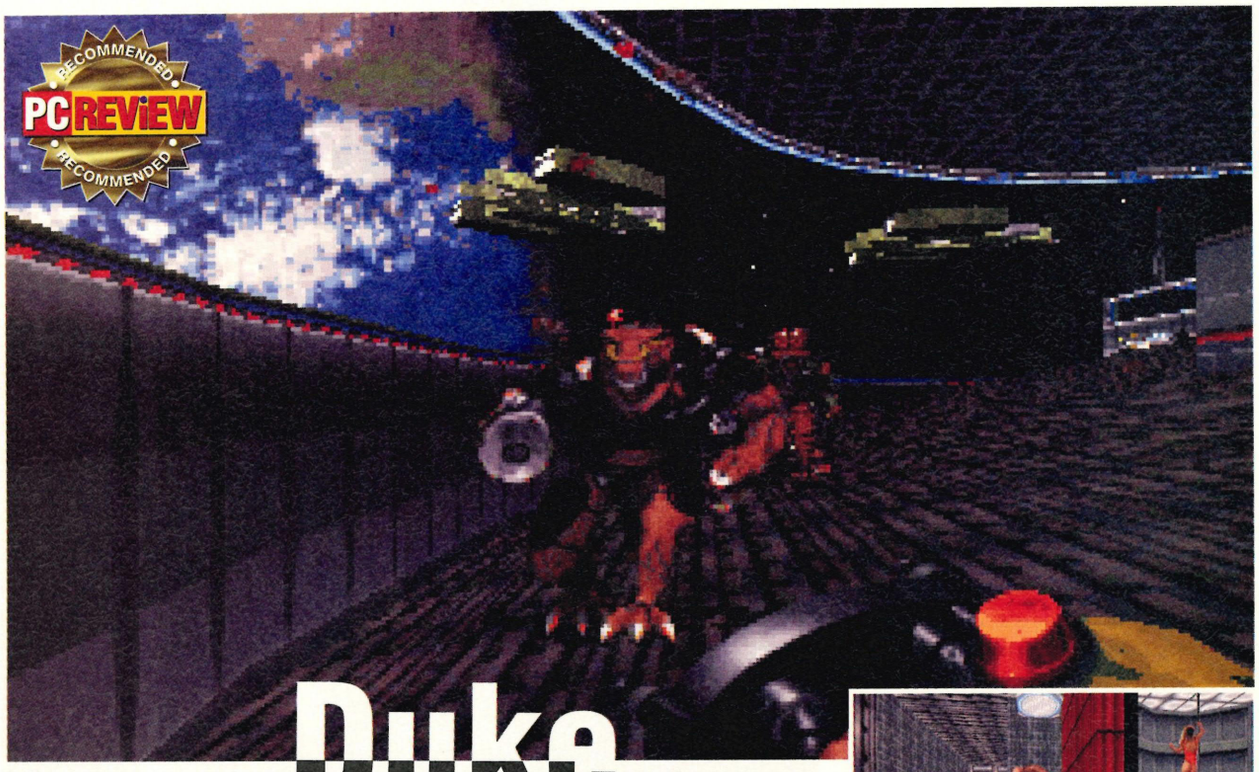
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◀ *Lost in space... luckily I have my trusty flamethrower by my side. You're toast, dude!*

Duke Nukem 3D



◀ *Running around a nightclub, you get to meet some tasty go-go dancers — and blow them away.*



▲ *While it eats ammo at a frightening rate, the chaingun is among the most satisfying weapons.*

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 DX2/66, MSDOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: Sound Blaster and comp

Ooh, Duke, you're so macho, Pat Fox loves a bit of submission.

It's been a long wait. It may be hard to believe, but Doom has been with us for over two years now, and although a few games have come close to matching it for thrills and originality — notably Hexen (reviewed issue 50 rated 8) and Descent (reviewed issue 42 rated 9) — there has been nothing that surpassed it. Doom II was a complete anticlimax, basically rehashing the same game with a couple of extra weapons and monsters, and virtually every other contender has been just a variation on the same theme. But finally it's here — a game that can truly stand up, stick out its manly chin and look the big scary Doom monster right in the face. This is the third game that Duke Nukem has starred in, and it's a cracker. Make no mistake — this is still just a shoot em 'up, light on the brainwork and heavy on the trigger-finger — but it's elevated to a whole new level by a hugely advanced graphics engine, a rich vein of invention and humour, and of course liberal doses of heavy armament, blood and gore.

Vorsprung durch tecnik

It doesn't take long after the game begins before you start to notice the advances that have been made in the game engine: for a start, it is possible to have sloping floors, doors that open like real doors, to blow holes in walls and drop through to lower levels, just for starters. All this is augmented by the designers' sense of humour and invention: on the first level you get to shoot people while they're on the bog and then 'drain the main' yourself; you can run around and trash a porn store and make use of the private 'booths'; on a later level you are standing on the San Andreas fault as it cracks and the earth ruptures beneath your feet. You are constantly discovering new little quirks and details that the creators of the game have added, and in awe of the spectacular settings and the ways in which you can interact with them.

Duke Nukem doesn't really do much that is completely new, but it does what it does with such style and humour that it's hard not to fall for it. It is what Doom II should have been — the same as Doom, but bigger, better, faster. With all the multiplayer options you could want, and the ability to run smoothly in SVGA even on a slow Pentium (and resolutions up to 1600x1200 supported), this is a must-have. The world may be waiting for the Quake, but for now this'll do me just fine...



PCR VERDICT

Type: *Shoot 'em up*

Publisher: *US Gold*

Price: *£5.99 shareware/£39.99*

Contact: *(0121) 606 1800*

Doom with knobs on? Perhaps, but what big knobs they are.

9

Earthworm Jim

Long, pink and slimy... but enough about Pat Fox, what about EarthWorm Jim?

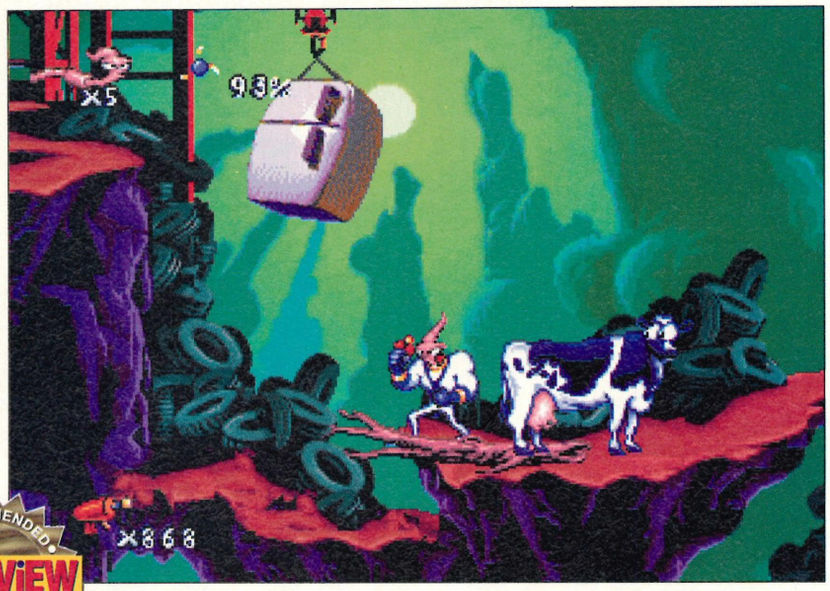
CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 DX 33Mhz, Win 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows compatible card



▲ *If you're going to finish this level, you've got to find a way to launch the cow. It's easy though if you keep a cool head!*

Worms have undergone something of an image change recently. Long considered to be pretty much a nonentity in the field of action and excitement, the humble earthworm went about its daily routine with a notable lack of drama and heroism. But suddenly, the lowly annelid has been transformed into a rugged all-action hero: first the eponymous star of the recent smash-hit blast Worms (reviewed issue 51 rated 9), and now the intrepid lead in this new platform game from Activision. It may all seem a little unlikely, but when the results are of this standard, I'm not about to complain.

RECOMMENDED PC REVIEW RECOMMENDED

Slug fest

The story is pure over-the-top cartoon nonsense. Jim was a normal worm until he wriggled into a powersuit that had fallen from space. Now he's on the run from the evil Psy-Crow and his minions and must use his new-found powers to rescue the beautiful Princess What's-Her-Name from her evil twin sister Queen Pulsating, Bloated, Festering, Sweaty, Pus-Filled, Malformed, Slug-For-A-Butt.

Earthworm Jim has class written all over it. All the characters have that authentic cartoony exaggeration due to being animated by ex-Disney employees — but the detail that has been put into breathing life into Jim is just awesome. He runs, jumps and swings with a smooth, fluid motion, and if you leave him standing around for too long, he sings a song or takes a wazz. The backgrounds too are superb and you're always stumbling across hidden bonuses and clever details that just serve to increase the appeal of the game.



The action itself is relentless and hectic; although it begins as a conventional platformer, there are levels that involve bungee fighting, hamster riding, and taking a dog for a walk among others. It's never easy, and getting from one place to the next without dying or being eaten (he's just a worm, remember) often requires some pretty nifty work on the joypad. Difficult as some sections are though, I never even considered giving it all up as a lost cause — it's just too much fun.

It's been a long time since I've seen a PC platform game as good as this — the last time I remember being this addicted to anything like this was with the Lost Vikings (reviewed issue 23, rated 8). This is a perfect conversion of an almost perfect game, and I can't wait for the arrival of EarthWorm Jim 2.





▲ *Saddle up posse, it's time for a hamster ride.*

◀ *Rub Peter the dog up the wrong way and he mutates into this guy. Please don't make me angry...*

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Platform game*

Publisher: *Activision*

Price: *£29.99*

Contact: *(0181) 742 9400*

Quite possibly the best platform game I've ever played.

9



EARTHWORM JIM 2

TWO TIMES THE FUN!
TWO TIMES THE EXCITEMENT!

Catch him if you can!

- Over 5 new weapons to choose from! Guns, guns, guns!
- Uses Animation II & Silicon Graphics 3D characters
- Level designs that only Shiny Entertainments is capable of creating
- Returning favourite characters: Princess What's-Her-Name, Psycrow, Peter Puppy and Bob the Goldfish!
- See Jim in disguise as a blind cave salamander
- Whip, run, jump, fly and snail your way to victory!





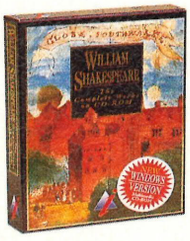
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FUNSOFT

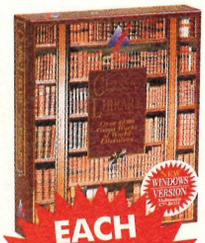
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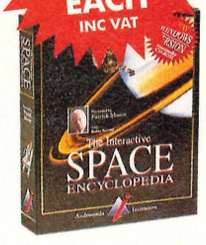


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◀ My, what large shoulder pads you have. And what a huge chopper... (sigh!)

CyberMage

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 66Mhz 486DX2
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: Soundblaster and comp

What, I hear you ask, is a Cybermage? Well, it's a bit complicated but it seems to have something to do with weird mysticism, genetic engineering and big blokes who look like cats.

Dashing, bold, heroic — all words that could be used to describe Pat Fox. Yeah, right.

Anyway, it doesn't really matter because CyberMage the game is another one of those 3D shoot em-up jobbies — this time you've got a crystal stuck in your forehead and you're done up in a suit that makes you look like a refugee from a Tick cartoon, but it's still pretty much the same old formula.

All right, it's not entirely fair to lump this game in with all the other not-quite-Dooms that have built up in a big steaming mound in the corner of the office over the past couple of years. CM at least makes a passing effort to sustain some sort of plot throughout the game, and your tasks do not always consist of collecting the right key for the right door. On the second level, for example, your mission is to run about the city stealing enough money to take on the humungous bad dude Mongo in the Arena, in order to earn your escape. At various points in the game you can even jump into a tank for a quick spin: it's a nice touch, but to be honest it's just like the rest of the game only less easy to steer.

Urban sprawl

The graphics are exactly what you'd expect, with a pretty, texture-mapped environment that even allows rooms above rooms (not possible in Doom or its sequel) and some suitably mean-looking meanies to blast into little meaty chunks. You can look up and down, and fly, and there's an automap that can be overlaid on the gamescreen for convenience. The size of the levels is truly impressive — the city in particular is huge and sprawling, the streets twisting and it's easy to lose your way among the buildings.

So there's nothing seriously wrong with Cybermage — save for a complete lack of multiplayer options — but there's nothing earth-shatteringly stunning about it, either. I was a bit disappointed since it is, after all, an Origin product. There's quite a lot of it, and it's tough enough to guarantee you more than a few hours of fun. However, if you're looking for one good reason not to buy it, then you need only take a look at Duke Nuke 'Em 3D.



▲ Ew, it's a weird sort of mutant vole with big teeth. Lucky I'm an intrepid superhero, really.



▲ Ha, I'm in this small room and you can't get me. It's lucky I'm not 'Claustrophobia Man'.

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....Shoot em-up
Publisher: .....Electronic Arts
Price: £44.99
Contact: .....(01753) 549442

Not bad for what it is, but it's no Doom-beater — it gives it a slight slap though.

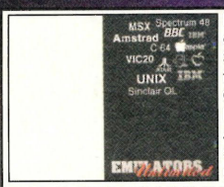
7



This is Mongo. He has an over-active pirtuatary gland, and a bad attitude. ▼

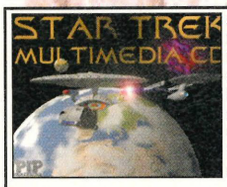


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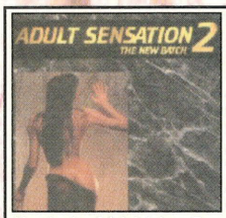
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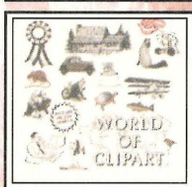


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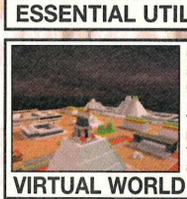


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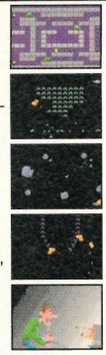
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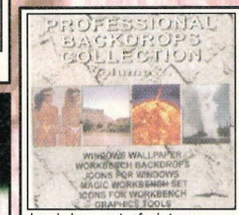
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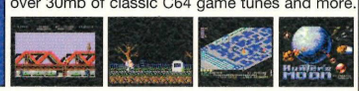


Rated: *AF GOLD 95% - CUAMIGA 91% - AUI Over 90% - AC over 90%*

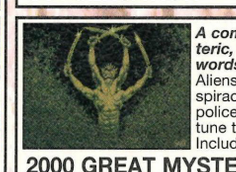
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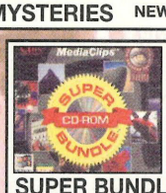
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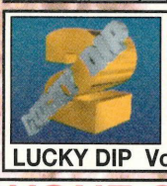
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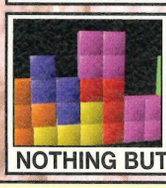
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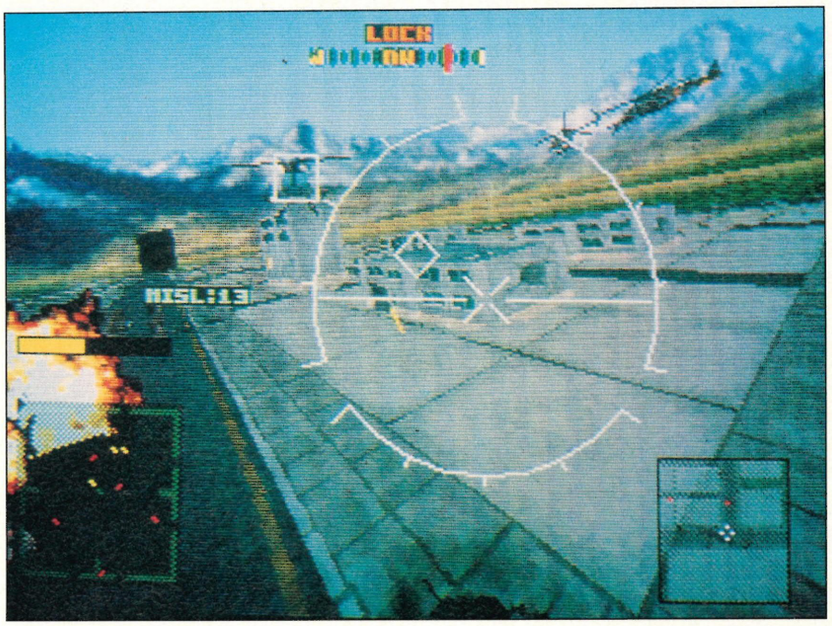
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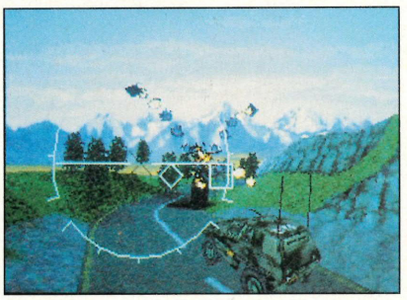
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Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2





◀ *KABOOM! All hell breaks loose as I clear the road ahead. Damon Hill could do with one of these babies next season.*



▲ *Admiring the scenery in VR cockpit mode. Oi! Careful with those rotor blades mate.*

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486DX 66MHz, DOS 5.0

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

Sound: All major soundcards

usual shoot everything approach, although having said that, the explosions are terrific. Destroy a tank or an armoured car and flaming debris will arc off in all directions.

The truly sick can even waste the survivors after they've abandoned their vehicle and run off in panic. (That's pretty un UN-like. Ed)

Hellfire! Everybody duck. They've given Rowan Jackson a helicopter gunship to play with and he can't find the hand brake.

Several years ago, Core Design had Amiga owners gyrating their mice wildly with the original and highly rated Thunderhawk. Now, in the era of Pentiums and super consoles comes Firestorm: Thunderhawk 2. Wanton destruction, a pumping CD sound track and enough campaigns to keep Esther Rantzen happy for weeks.

It's the usual scenario. The NATO rapid reaction force of which you are a part is sent to sort out anyone who gets a bit too big for their boots. Baddies range from drugs barons to stroppy Serbs and fundamentally naughty Iraqis. Each campaign consists of several missions that must be completed in order to progress. There's plenty of hardware to chuck at the opposition including cluster bombs, missiles and rocket pods. You can even fire Penguins — just don't tell the RSPCA.

Each mission has a specific goal. One has you escorting a UN convoy through Serb-held territory. You must get them safely over a bridge to succeed. It's a nice change from the

Frustrating Reality

Unfortunately, flying the helicopter can be frustrating. The controls are sluggish and my joystick occasionally stopped working altogether (titter ye not). VR Cockpit mode enables you to target objects by looking left and right but it's difficult to control your head movements.

On the plus side, the graphics and playability are excellent. The detail doesn't blur up close and the screen can be shrunk a lá Magic Carpet to improve the frame rate. Even my trusty old DX2 had no problem delivering the goods. There's loads of digitised speech, decent music and a thumping "whoop whoop" helicopter noise.

However, for all its flashy sound and graphics Thunderhawk 2 still manages to lack any real lasting appeal. There are no linked play options and the later missions are frustrating, since it's inevitable that you'll need several attempts to complete them.

This is good fun as far as it goes, but control problems and lack of longevity stop it from continuing the Thunderhawk classic status.



▲ *Arms runners are no trouble but later you will meet far meaner critters.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: *Fight simulator*

Publisher: *Core Design*

Price: *£39.99*

Contact: *(01332) 297797*

Action packed, but let down by poor controls and a lack of variety.

6





Chronomaster

▲ *The graphics are so attractive, that if this game was a bloke, I'd jump on him.*

Desperate to prove that she can be as cruel to time as it's been to her Kate Russell takes on Chronomaster... and loses!

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 33Mhz
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: All major soundcards

One of the biggest problems with graphic adventures today is that they all tell basically the same story. Something really bad happens. Really bad people benefit. And then some evangelistic lunatic armed with nothing more than a rucksack and a pair of sturdy boots bowls in to save the day. Oh don't get me wrong, I love this type of game, but I'm sorry, no matter how you ice it, a fruit cake is still a fruit cake at the end of afternoon tea.

That's why US Gold's new adventure offering — Chronomaster — is such a pleasant surprise. Crack open the shrinkwrap and you'll find a game with a great original plot.

This stunningly animated point-and-click adventure was created by Intracorp, the same company that brought us Witchaven and TekWar. Written by Roger Zelazny — the award winning science fiction writer who died recently — it is set some time in the future, in an era when the universe is made up of pocket worlds, each obeying their own laws of physics. Magic and science co-exist in harmony on these man-made havens as each has been designed to precise man-made specifications by their owners.

Everything is chugging along tickety-boo, until a band of marauding space pirates invade. They force the old Terran Government underground and the territory is left open to any passing looter who fancies his chances.

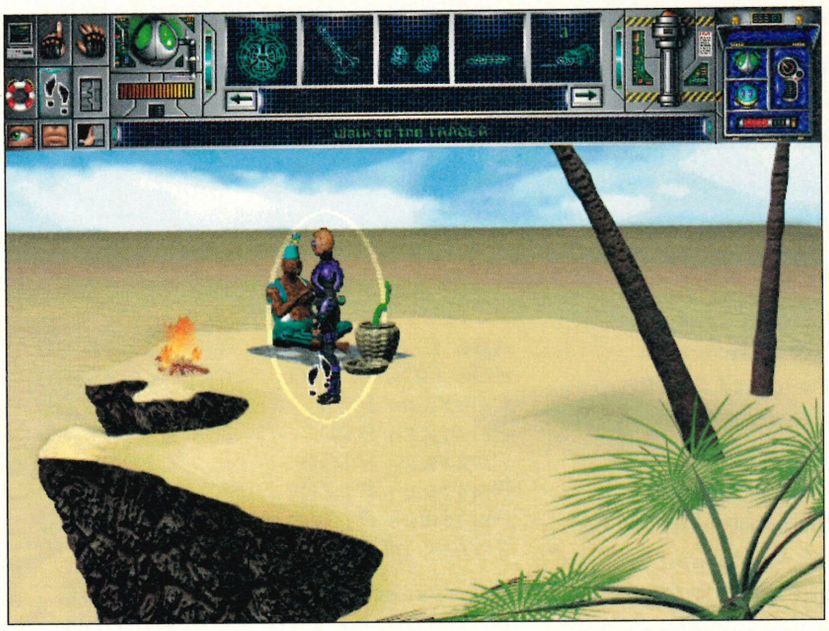
As if this wasn't bad enough, it would appear that two of the worlds — Urbs and Aurans — have been mysteriously shut down, their inhabitants suspended in time.

Enter Rene Korda, our hero wouldn't ya know, a retired pocket world designer who suffers from a serious case of apathy. Unlike the majority of adventure heroes, he isn't your typical do-gooder, and the council of the Terran Government are forced to offer him a large cash incentive before he'll get off his backside to help. Not only will he have to investigate these sinister happenings, but he also has to locate the controlling key in each time-frozen world before he can restore them to all their former glory.

Animal magnetism

This can only be done by locating magnetic north on each world, and then setting up scanning equipment to show the location of the key. Not as easy as it sounds, because there are, of course, a multitude of obstacles preventing you from doing this.

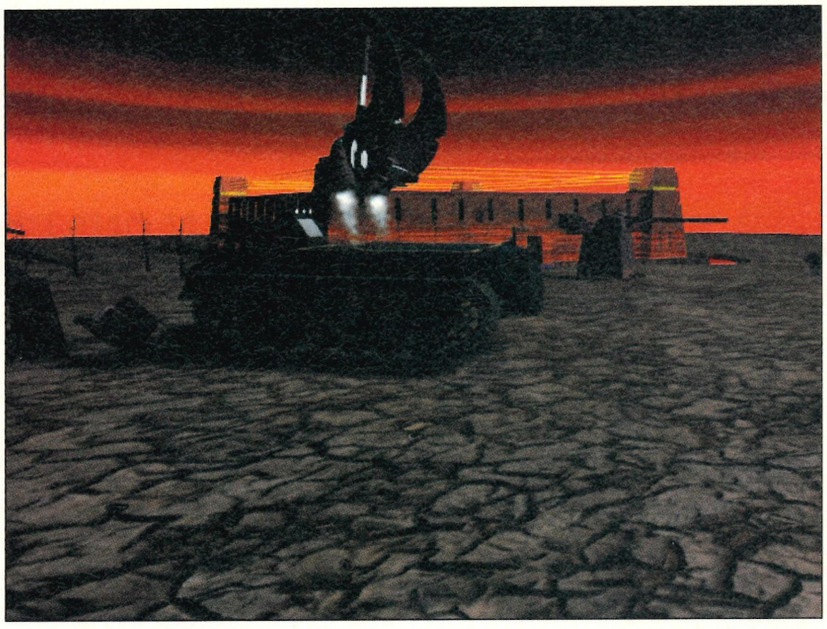
In a welcome departure from the traditional "boy-scout" mentality of the graphic adventurer, Korda (named after an adventure film maker) is hacked off at being roped into the proceedings. He is aided on his quest by Jester, a cute hologram who is actually his spaceship's computer, plus a large supply of bottled time which allows him to walk unaffected around the time-locked worlds.





▲ *Korda comes across some hungry genies stranded in time. If he agrees to go and find something for them to eat, they'll lend him a flying carpet.*

◀ *Korda's time bubble allows him to move around the frozen worlds without disturbing them — but if he touches anything it'll come back to life. I'll leave the snake alone, then.*





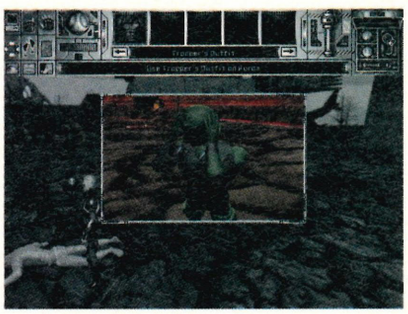
▲ *Oh dear, he doesn't look too friendly. Is he related to the Terminator by any chance?*

◀ *People flee from the failing pocket worlds, leaving them to be ransacked by pirates.*

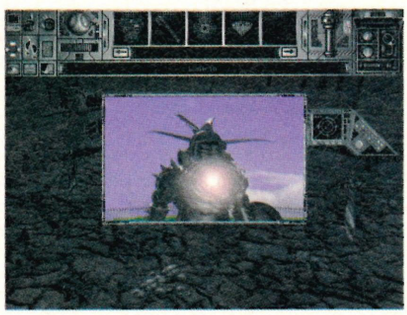
Superb 3D rendered graphics create an atmospheric setting for this twisted tale of deceit and intrigue. There are a good range of puzzles to keep your brain well and truly stretched, as well as some relatively easy ones thrown in to keep the story moving along at a healthy pace.

You will find yourself searching the furthest reaches of six strange worlds for information and objects to help you solve this mystery of mind-bending proportions.

As with all graphic adventures, if it's lying around, pick it up. Even the most obscure objects will come in handy at some stage in the game. Annoyingly, the mouse pointer doesn't indicate when it's over an object or person you can interact with. Instead you must keep your eyes fixed on a small dialogue box at the top of the screen, which means that you'll have to resort to some pretty manic mouse waving to find all the hidden objects. And it's not always a good idea to go poking your fingers into things you don't understand either (good grief, I sound like my grandmother), as previously time-locked objects and animals are released from their stasis upon contact with your "time bubble". This, I found to



▲ *When Korda uses an object correctly, a small cut-scene appears in a window in the middle of the screen.*



▲ *The statue in the garden on Urbs just happens to be standing right on the planet's magnetic north.*



▲ *The little floating drone behind Korda is his link to Jester, the ship's computer. Looks like a Smash robot to me.*



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my peril, can have some disastrous consequences. For example, when you come across a scene where people are strewn in tatters across the desert, a cyclone frozen in mid-swirl a few yards off, (stay away from it...). Or at the very least be sure to perform a quick save before striding confidently into its midst.

Sudden death

And talking of dying a grizzly death after playing for one hour solid and forgetting to save your game... I found the "failed mission" sequences remarkably disappointing. With such a visually accomplished game I would've expected to be treated to a spectacular full motion scene with some idea of what will happen to the universe now that I've failed. Instead I found myself unceremoniously dumped back to the load-game screen without so much as a "don't call us".

The player interface allows quick and easy access to all options and objects in the inventory, with Jester stepping in with some friendly advice every now and then (usually when you're just about to do something really stupid). This interface face makes Chronomaster incredibly easy to get to grips with, freeing up the brain for the far more important tasks.

The verbal exchanges are a tad lengthy on occasion. The fully rendered graphics are awesome, but some might consider this style of game to be somewhat dated. At the end of the day, it's all a question of taste. As graphic adventures go it certainly holds its own. It's a highly polished game that offers endless hours of brain-teasing play. I loved it.

▲ ***One of the many buildings Korda must visit on Urbs. Useful objects are scattered around various locations, and he must explore them all.***



▲ ***What's going on here, then? Whatever it is, it doesn't look too good for the guy on the end of that firing squad.***



▲ ***Chronomaster has all the usual speech and text options. The dialogue is very clear.***

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Graphic adventure*
Publisher: .....*US Gold*
Price: *£39.99*
Contact:.....*(0121) 625 2255*

Slick, smooth and engrossing. Adventure with attitude... how refreshing.

9











Brave new



Chronomaster and TekWar from US Gold are bringing ever closer together the realms of science fiction and computer games. Does this herald the dawn of a new age in gaming where science fiction writers, actors and icons become the Gods who will create the fabric of future computer games?

Today's Personal Computers are the stuff that science fiction is made of. It's one example of yesterday's science fiction becoming today's science fact. If you could take a PC made in 1996 back to the society of the 60s, it would represent a quantum leap in the technology of the day and make you very popular with the military (the cold war being at its height then). Yet, without the dubious benefits of war and the space race of the seventies, some of the inventions that we take for granted would still not be realised. These leaps in technology, along with the public's increase in expectations from entertainment, have fuelled and propelled the world of computer games from Atari's bat and ball Pong of the late seventies, to full colour photo-realistic epics such as Chronomaster. In fact, US Gold would argue that the leaps in programming have not yet been fully met by similar increases in the actual content and plot of these games. That is, until the release of Chronomaster and Tek War.

Whilst the graphics of games have advanced to the point where professional animators now outnumber the programmers as a matter of course, US Gold argues that the plots and storylines of games still remain fairly secondary to most publishers. However, it feels that as games become more like films, it is now looking towards a more professional approach to scripting games. In this respect, US Gold believes that TekWar and Chronomaster, have great strides in this direction. The games have made this leap by utilising the scriptwriting and directing talents of William Shatner in TekWar and the classic science fiction writing giant Roger Zelazny, who devised the concept for Chronomaster.

The unique combination of writing talent and the programming skills of US producers Capstone is what makes US Gold, the games European publishers very confident as it sees its US games actually mirroring the advances in game design it has already incorporated itself in current in-house projects. US Gold Managing Director, Jeremy Smith understands the importance of using the latest technology to realise the full potential of absorbing storylines. "We were very happy to become publisher of Tek Wars and Chronomaster in Europe as we feel that the titles represent the very best in game depth, plotline and the latest PC technology. The games complement perfectly our own portfolio of current PC titles". How does Jeremy see the development of current games? "Doom was the first 3D perspective shooter and excellent in its day. However the PC now has moved on yet again allowing publishers to combine fast, arcade action with a plot and depth to draw players further into a game's world and ultimately feel far more a part of the world which they are visiting. TekWar ultimately achieves this". But what of the graphic adventure? Jeremy continues, "Chronomaster has a complete plot. As one of the last things ever written by SF author Roger Zelazny, before his death, it stands as a testament to his genius. You basically steer Roger's character Korda around a universe created for him — it's like a classic novel only players can re-write the conclusion." And from the excitement surrounding these two titles at US Gold, it would seem that these two excellent games will ultimately enjoy happy endings proving that gamesplayers everywhere are ready for this latest breed of gaming.

worlds

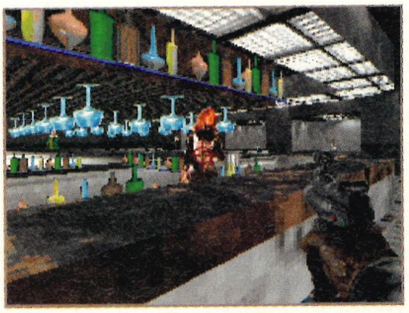


Roger Zelazny

Roger Zelazny, late author and science fiction icon of the 20th century who with his partner, Jane Lindskold took Chronomaster from concept to completion.

Roger Zelazny is not an author's name that is known to everyone. When Catherine Cookson and Daniel Steele were just twinkles in the eye of some heir-apparent gypsy, Roger Zelazny had already explored vast continents in the far reaches of the universe. A prolific writer, Zelazny's proficiency with plots led to him being awarded numerous Hugo and Nebula awards — the Oscars for SF writers. It is for this reason that US Gold is proud to be associated with the product. "We are excited to be involved with these landmark products which are an equal fusion of the best in SF writers and the best in games producers".

However, being a science fiction writer, doesn't automatically make people a wizard at computer games. Luckily Roger's partner,





William Shatner

William Shatner — actor, director and writer of the Tek War series who with the PC game, boldly went where even Captain Kirk hadn't been before.

Captain Kirk has probably done more to advance the popularity of Science Fiction than any other single 20th century figure. So to be able to associate William Shatner with the game TekWar should be a precursor to using the very best that technology has to offer. William Shatner certainly believes in technology. "CD-ROM will play a huge part in the future. I feel certain that it will be at the forefront of a whole new era in entertainment". And he certainly believes this as he has been heavily involved with the project from the start. "I began as a computer novice and approached the whole thing as a movie, suggesting the mix of action and strategy, editing storyboards and being involved in all of the film-like qualities of a computer game. I was ignorant of the power of computers to entertain but now am convinced. I recently bought a PC and was amazed with the diversity of entertainment that it represented." And what next? Well Mr Shatner is quite clear on that. "I've cut my teeth on TekWar but am already talking to the (US) publishers Intracorp about other ideas. I learned quite a lot from TekWar and I'm excited about future possibilities. You can create whole worlds whole universes and their accompanying populations on a scale that is not even possible for Hollywood. The computer gives a screenwriter an enormous advantage that can be exploited to the hilt". With the quality of the game already certain, William Shatner could be setting out a voyage of discovery that even Captain James Tiberius Kirk would find amazing...



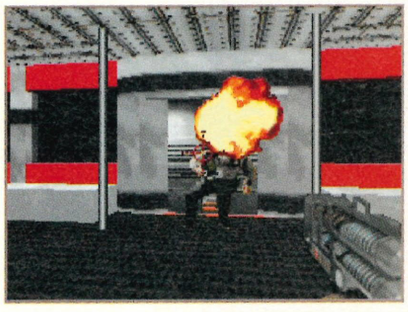
Amy Smith Capstone

VP Development Producer and champion of publisher US Gold's, Tek War.

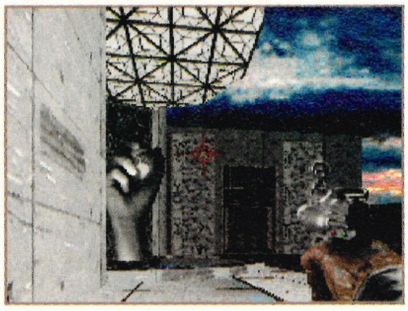
Amy Smith is a busy woman. As she sits down to talk to me, I feel that I've intruded into a realm over which she stays in control. "I'm sorry, but I haven't got a lot of time to talk as there's so much that I have to achieve today". A few minutes of conversation later and she softens and relaxes as though welcoming the chance to allow herself a small diversion suggesting a woman who eventually "achieves" most things through a no-nonsense approach and a certain amount of determination. With TekWar, it could be argued that she's achieved a lot in one year as the game's executive producer. "I've always been a great SF fan and when I read the Tek War series, I set out to get the license". Eventually, she found it lying with Universal.



Professor Jane Lindskold was jointly involved with the project to complement Roger's lack of games knowledge. She picks up the story. "Roger was approached to be involved with a computer game project and initially said no but later decided that it could be done if the two of us worked together. He developed the theme and storyline and I looked after the day to day running up to Roger's death half-way through the project, pulling on my role-playing background'. But how did this fit in with working with the developers, Dream Forge? Was it easy to convince game makers to adapt to an elaborate script? "It was always a collaborative project. I enjoy writing novels, but it's interesting to work with people who can turn your ideas into a reality. We worked really well together. Dream Forge even made a commitment to multiple endings for the game which of course is something that is not possible in novels. It's great to think that unlike with books, in this game people will be able to determine their own endings. To a writer this is a fantastic and fascinating world."



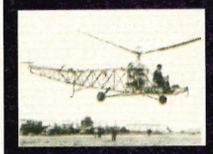
Luckily Capstone had already done An American Tale with them and so a deal was easily negotiated which included William Shatner working closely with the development team. What was it like working with Captain Kirk? "It was great yet quite frightening to work with him", Amy confides, "all of us were completely in awe and constantly called him Mr Shatner 'till the point where he turned around one day and shouted, 'Please, please, you can call me Bill''. Working under such a watchful eye must have had some





Science Fiction To Science Fact

Science fiction to science fact? Here's a list of many modern day items that we take for granted born from theory, conjecture and the trials of just a few individuals.



HELICOPTER
Igor Sikorsky flies his VS-300 in 1939 using four sets of blades and a rather nifty hat. The first cross-country flight was made in 1942 by its successor. The journey was over 700 miles

The first person to put designs onto paper for helicopters was the 15th-century artist, scientist and engineer Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), who made drawings showing an aircraft with a helical rotor in about 1500. The dream was not realised however until a German engineer Heinrich Focke was responsible for the first successful (but rather short) heli flight in 1936.



EARTH NOT AT THE CENTRE OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM
The ideas of satellites orbiting the earth is not something new today with man-made satellites. However, the Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543), first postulated that the planets in our solar system were not orbiting the Earth and that the Sun was the centre and everything else revolved around this. This got him into fairly serious trouble with the rather ego-centric Catholic church, (as it did with many of the followers of this Heliocentric theory). Thus his model of the solar system was not officially recognised world-wide until as late as the 18th Century.

HOVERCRAFT
The Hovercraft was invented by the British



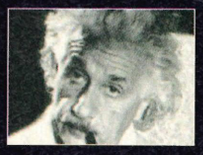
engineer Christopher Cockerell in 1959 and can be used on almost any terrain, from flat concrete through marshland and onto its easiest favourite, water.



THE WRIGHT STUFF
Orville and Wilbur Wright took the writings and research of 19th-century German engineer Otto Lilienthal and modified his theories to make the first manned flight on December 7th 1903. From its humble flight of a few yards, and after discovering the usefulness of planes in warfare during World War I, the aeroplane quickly developed over the following years.



ALIEN LIFE
Many science fiction writers have postulated the existence of alien life. However after the Roswell incident in the US in 1947 the U.S. Air Force set up a government team to investigate UFOs as a possible threat to national security. In 1969 when the department (officially) closed down they maintained that 'no UFO reported, investigated, and evaluated by the Air Force has ever given any indication of threat to our national security". However during that time out of over 12,000 reports that were received, over 700 reports were listed as unexplained.



NUCLEAR WEAPON THEORY
As early as 1905, Albert Einstein had already published his special theory of relativity which was represented by the equation E=mc2. His theory postulated that for any given mass (m) there is an associated amount of energy (E) equal to this mass multiplied by the square of the speed of light (c). Conversely this meant that even the smallest amount of matter is equivalent to a vast amount of energy.

This means that in theory, a couple of pounds of senna pods could produce an explosion of around 20 Megatons. This could feasibly destroy large cities and certainly make quite a mess of your Marks and Spencer trousers...



THE BIBLE'S DESTRUCTION OF THE EARTH
The first atomic bomb (or A-bomb) was tested on July 16, 1945, at Alamogordo, New Mexico — the discovery of which some would claim was responsible for the bringing to a close the second world war. At the height of the cold war, there were enough nuclear missiles and bombs to destroy the entire population of planet Earth several times over.



BAR CODES AND BEELZEBUB
Conspiracy theorists maintain that the two thin lines at the centre and either end of a bar code is a representation of the number six. This means that every product in every store contains the digits 666 which fulfils the prophecy in Revelations 13, verse 17: "Moreover, it caused everyone, great or small, rich or poor, slaves and free, to be branded with a mark on his right hand, or forehead, and no one was allowed to buy or sell unless he bore this mark, either name or number."

effect on the finished product. "From the books it was obvious to me that we needed a Wolfenstein-like engine. Doom hadn't yet been created at that time and so we used the Apogee 3D engine which was almost finished. We ended up not only using it but also helping to perfect the engine with the developers. Through constant improvement, we added 'height' to the game. Enemies can shoot from above or below and your character must keep alert or die. In this way, we believe the game has utilised more computer power which has added more realism than many of the games on the market."

With Tek War now virtually in the box, Amy is already looking at new ideas and the latest technology, but remains tight-lipped about her next project.

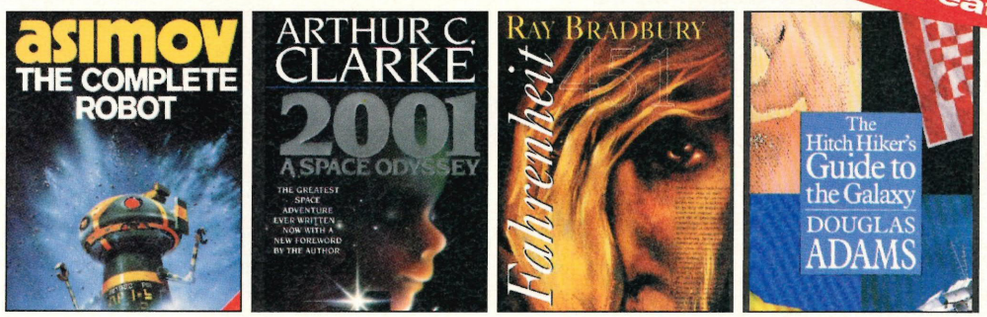
However, she sees the advance of hardware technology as an important catalyst in unlocking more doors and giving developers the tools to improve games even further. "We can now utilise much better quality of video in our games to further increase the realism of our games."

But just how far can this be achieved? Amy's very certain of the future. "The intelligence of computer opponents is always increasing but at any level it's easy to see that the best opponents will continue to be human for some time. The best way to develop this is through the Internet. Whether it is multi-player games played through dumb terminals which utilise the full power of the Internet or virtual reality link-ups is really just a question of time."

And as if the statement reminds her of some achievements left unattended, she adds, "I really do have to go now". And no doubt she does. She's probably got to go off and make sure that the Internet is ready for multi-player games. Let's hope that it's ready for Amy....

Win an SF library of all the all-time greats

Science Fiction Scoop!



Win a colossal library of the greatest Science Fiction novels ever!

It's amazing just how fast and accurately these days that Science Fiction becomes science fact. The last few decades have seen many theories become solid fact. Jumps in technology have given the public space age technology that they already take for granted. Microwave cooking gives a practical examples of particle physics first postulated by Arthur C Clarke, latest engineering breakthroughs can now give us complete computer circuit boards that are smaller than a fingernail.

To celebrate the fusion of Science Fiction with computer games, US Gold is offering a spaceship full of classic SF books to ten lucky winners of this competition. All you have to do to answer the following question: Who was the last Dr Who?

Answers on a postcard, please, to Brave New Worlds, PC Review, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Entries should arrive here before the 31st March when the first ten correct entries to warp out of US Gold's black hole will each receive copies of the following books:

2001 - Arthur C Clarke
Fahrenheit 451 - Ray Bradbury
Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep - Philip K. Dick
The Complete Robot - Isaac Asimov
A Stainless Steel Rat is Born - Harry Harrison
Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy - Douglas Adams.

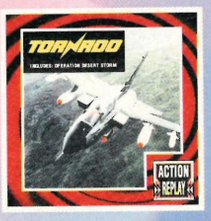


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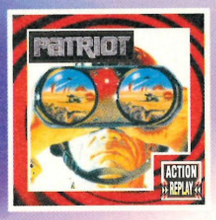


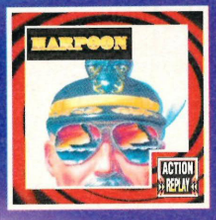


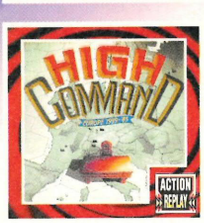




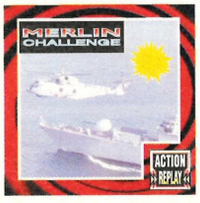




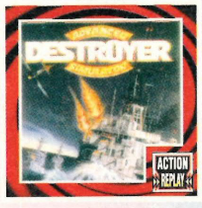








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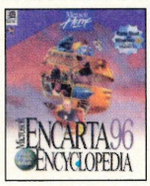
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SWAT officers are called in when a local youth adamantly refuses to tidy his room. ▶



▲ Why am I always the one who has to go at the front? What do you mean, I'm expendable?

Police Quest: SWAT

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486, Win 3.1, Win 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Win comp, Soundblaster

If you thought that American policemen were a bunch of gun-toting, trigger-happy psychopaths, then think again. Police Quest: SWAT aims to introduce you to the world of the elite Special Weapons And Tactics division of the LAPD — the ones who are called in cases of hostage taking and the like. But watch out: this is not Virtua Cop — you won't get far if your first response in any given situation is to shoot the nearest bad guy. This is the caring sharing nineties, so first you must try everything within your power to preserve the lives of the public and the criminal alike. If that fails, however, then feel free to blow the murdering scum away.

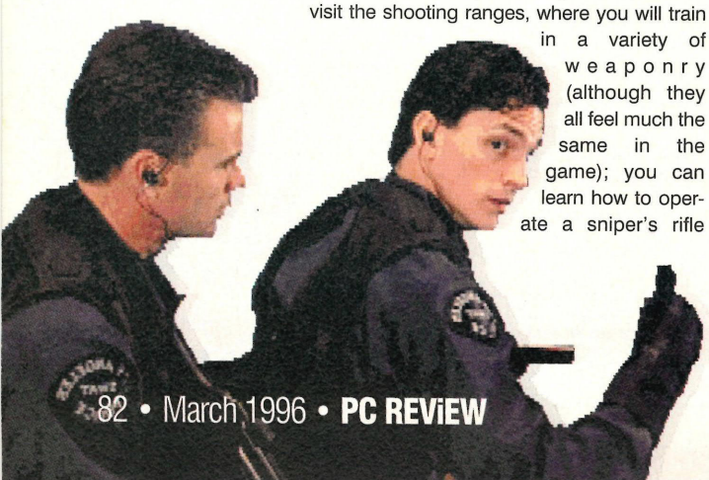
Pat Fox jumps at the opportunity to pick up a gun and shoot innocent bystanders.

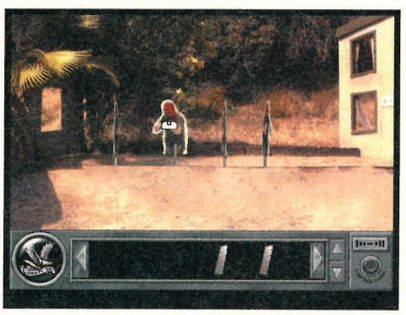
Home on the range

You must go through realistic training exercises and learn the actual operating techniques used by the SWAT teams, in order to go out and participate in operations yourself. You can visit the shooting ranges, where you will train in a variety of weaponry (although they all feel much the same in the game); you can learn how to operate a sniper's rifle (although it's actually extremely technical and tedious, so if I were you I'd forget about it); but above all you must learn the code of conduct and the chain of command, because no crime is greater here than insubordination.

The action consists of still backgrounds overlaid with live actors — the acting is only a little better than the rather dodgy standard we've come to expect from computer games. There are four CDs here, and not that many more missions, although there are a lot of permutations for each one, depending on your role — as rookie, element leader or sniper. The game engine can be frustratingly limiting however, and there's rarely more than one way to complete a mission.

This game goes a long way to shattering the myth that SWAT operatives are violent Rambo types who are only in it for the glory. Unfortunately, it also shatters the myth that this sort of police work is glamorous and action-packed — much of your time is spent on target practice, while the actual call-ups are nicely thought-out but rather limited. The best that can be said for it is that it's exhaustively realistic, but to be honest that doesn't make for a great game — this would work better as a multimedia product with interactive elements.





▲ Out on the shooting range, I test my mettle against a gang of marauding cardboard criminals.

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Tactical simulation*

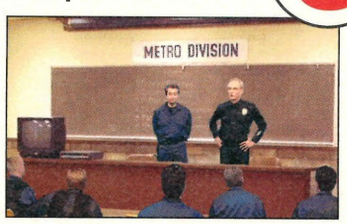
Publisher:.....*Sierra*

Price: *£39.99*

Contact: .....*(01734) 303322*

Probably very realistic, definitely rather tedious. Only for desperate cop-wannabes

6



ACTION REPLAY V 4.0

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Scans through memory for sound blaster sound samples. Save to disk as.voc and .wav formats. Edit and playback. Ideal for Windows effects. Very effective, even on CD games!!

SLO MO FUNCTION

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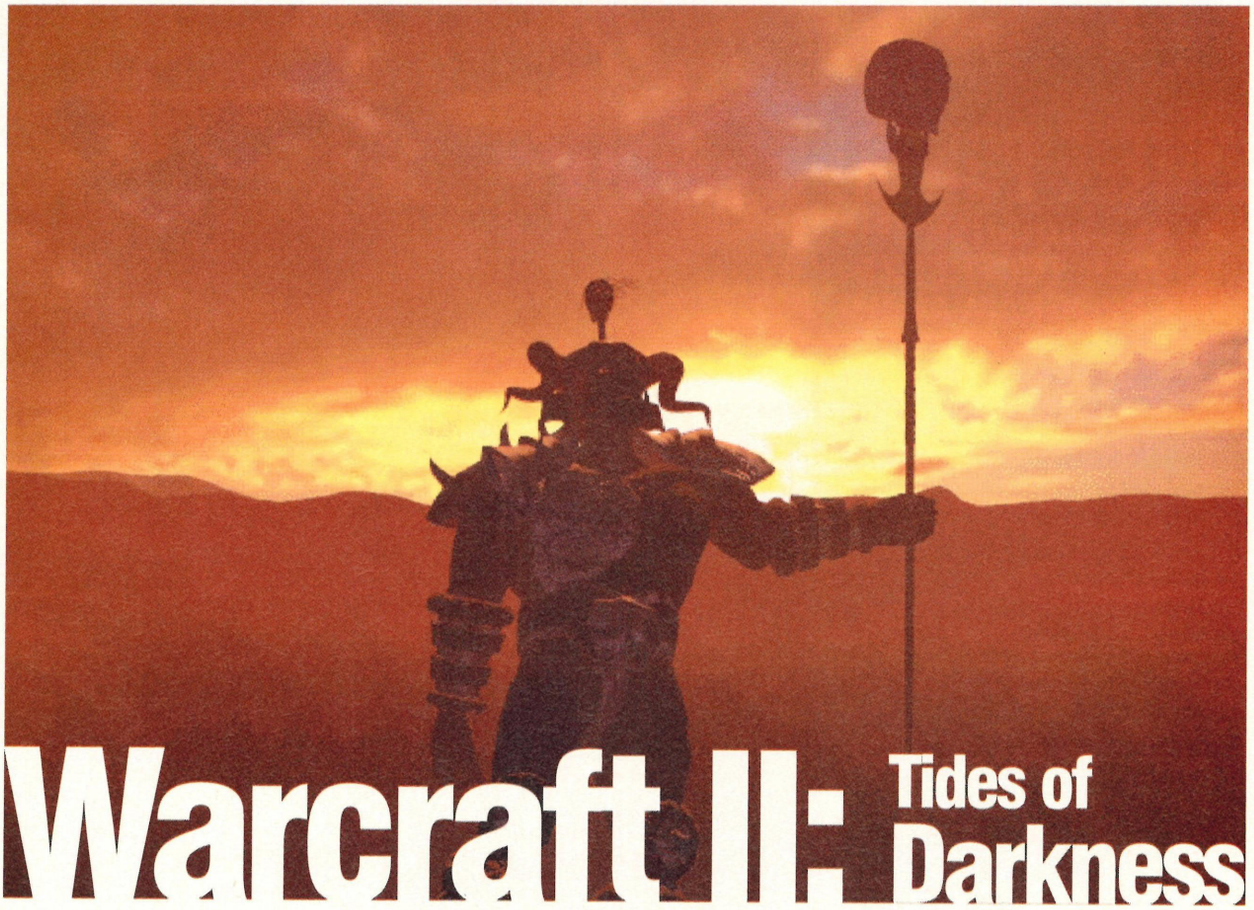


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Warcraft II: Tides of Darkness

The orcs and humans have unfinished business in Azeroth. Gordon Houghton picks a fight.

What does the word 'orcs' make you think of? Is it a) an exclamation of surprise; b) that social disease your friends don't like you talking about; or c) a horde of huge, slack-jawed, leathery fiends with poor personal habits and a hatred of all things human? If you chose the first two answers, go see a doctor. If you chose c), you know more about hairy beasts than you should, but you'll probably love this game.

Like Warcraft its predecessor, Tides of Darkness (TOD) is a mission-based strategy game in which you play orcs or their human opponents, usually in a struggle over territory. The idea is not particularly original, combining the tactical resource elements of SimCity with the cuteness of Populous, but it's brilliantly executed. It's got great graphics, superb speech, neat sound effects, and a wide range of characters, machines and gadgets.

CD ONLY

Min PC: 486 DX, DOS 5.0, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

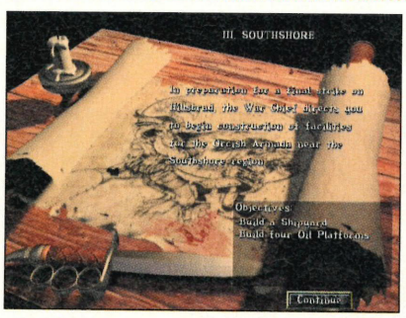
Sound: Most major sound cards

The good news for those who grew tired of the original Warcraft is that all of the old game's faults have been corrected — you don't have to build roads any more and the control system is much more flexible — and some excellent new features have also been added too.

Orcs and pork

For a start, the presentation is spot on. Apart from single-player human and orc campaigns, there are multi-player and custom modes, and a map editor. You can fiddle around with the speech and sound effects, alter the game speed, and even select Warcraft I's mouse controls to suit your own configurations.

The range of preset missions isn't huge, but the variety is good, including search-and-rescue, escorting important characters through



1 ***Whether you play an orc or a human, your task is divided into acts. Each act consists of several missions loosely linked to an overall strategy. In Act One, your aim as an orc is to overthrow the humans' stronghold.***



2 ***After some basic teaching and combat scenarios, you finally get to the serious stuff. From this miserable starting point on a remote island, you've got to establish a settlement, train troops, drill for oil and conquer the enemy.***

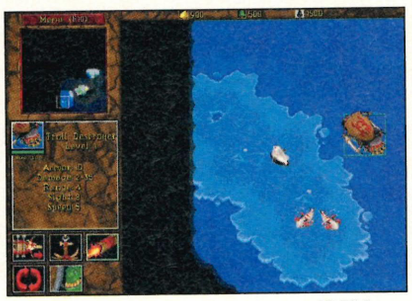


3 ***An hour or two later... and it's all over. The human resistance has been crushed, you've got a huge fleet of destroyers and tankers, and the last of four oil rigs is under construction. You even had time to kill a few sheep.***

enemy territory, a few sea battles and mysterious scenarios in which you learn your objectives as you progress. The majority of missions, though, are contests for land, in which you have to create a settlement using the available resources (timber, gold and oil) and train your personnel to harvest goods and defend your village. You also need to construct buildings such as guard towers for defence, and chicken or pig farms for food. Once you're strong enough to compete, you can launch an assault on your enemy.

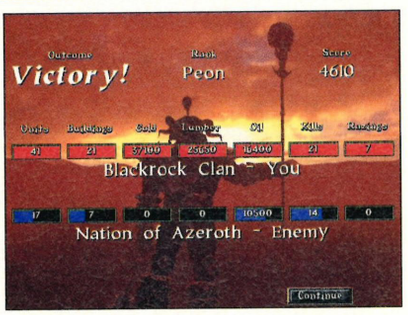
All this is made easier by a smart interface, which gives you a number of icon-based commands for each character and building, as well as allowing you to carry out actions automatically, and letting you control up to nine people at once. Keyboard alternatives speed up your decision-making process even more.

Those are the basics — when you've made it past the first couple of missions, things start getting frantic. This is partly because the computer opponents get smarter, and partly due to the increasing number of technological options available. For example, once you've created efficient mini-settlements with a town hall, barracks, lumber mill and blacksmith, you move onto shipyards, oil rigs, oil refineries, foundries, aviaries, mage towers, ogre mounds, alchemists, temples and — well, you get the idea.



▲ ***Fancy killing a cute baby seal? Tides of Darkness has its fair share of gratuitous violence towards small, cuddly creatures.***

This is Tide of Darkness's best feature: it rewards progress with surprises. You get a piece of new technology with each new mission, some scenarios give you more than one opponent, others feature new magic and special characters. There's no excuse for twiddling your thumbs during the rare moments of relaxation, either — the local population of seals, sheep or warthogs make exceedingly satisfying target practice.



4 ***Good work brings promotion, but only in small steps. It also brings this victory screen, which analyses your performance with a fine toothcomb. Surrender or get defeated and the statistics won't make pleasing reading.***

Frenzied fun

I can't find anything seriously wrong with TOD. It's a little easy to begin with, especially if you've played the original Warcraft, but once you've completed the First Act things start getting tougher. It can also be frustrating to play a mission for two or three hours, then launch an assault only to discover you've attacked too early and with too few troops — but if you save your position regularly this isn't a problem.

As a two-player head-to-head contest it's superb, because there are so many options available to create precisely the game you want. Even in solo mode, it's going to be a long time before you complete all the missions in both campaigns and exhaust all the customised alternatives.

If you've any interest at all in arcade-style strategy games, go out and buy it.

Do It Yourself

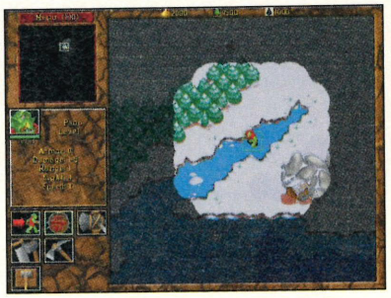
There are many ways you can extend the life of a game — with a variety of difficulty levels and terrain, a multi-player mode, customisable scenarios, or even a map editor. Tides of Darkness has the lot. Apart from the human and orc campaigns, there are over two dozen custom missions, with four map sizes and three terrain styles, and you can make the action as hard or as easy as you like. Once you've exhausted every inbuilt mission, you can create unlimited new scenarios using the map editor.



▲ ***The forest terrain type makes it hard to move around the landscape.***



▲ ***Wasteland is very open and is the simplest landscape to play.***



▲ ***Snowy terrain actually makes it easier for you to move over water.***



▲ ***Using the map editor, you can build your own custom missions.***

ALTERNATIVELY

WARCRAFT
Issue: 39, Rated: 7
Price: £39.99

Like its successor, this is a struggle to the death between orcs and humans, with a variety of missions and terrains. Much the same as Tides of Darkness, but more limited and not as well presented.

BATTLE ISLE 3
Issue: 50, Rated: 7
Price: £44.99

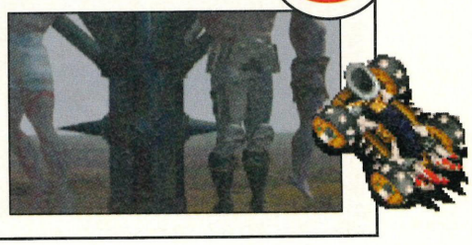
If orcs aren't your scene, BlueByte's superb future war simulator offers a similar mission-based structure, lots of fancy hardware and 40 scenarios in one- and two-player mode.

PCR VERDICT

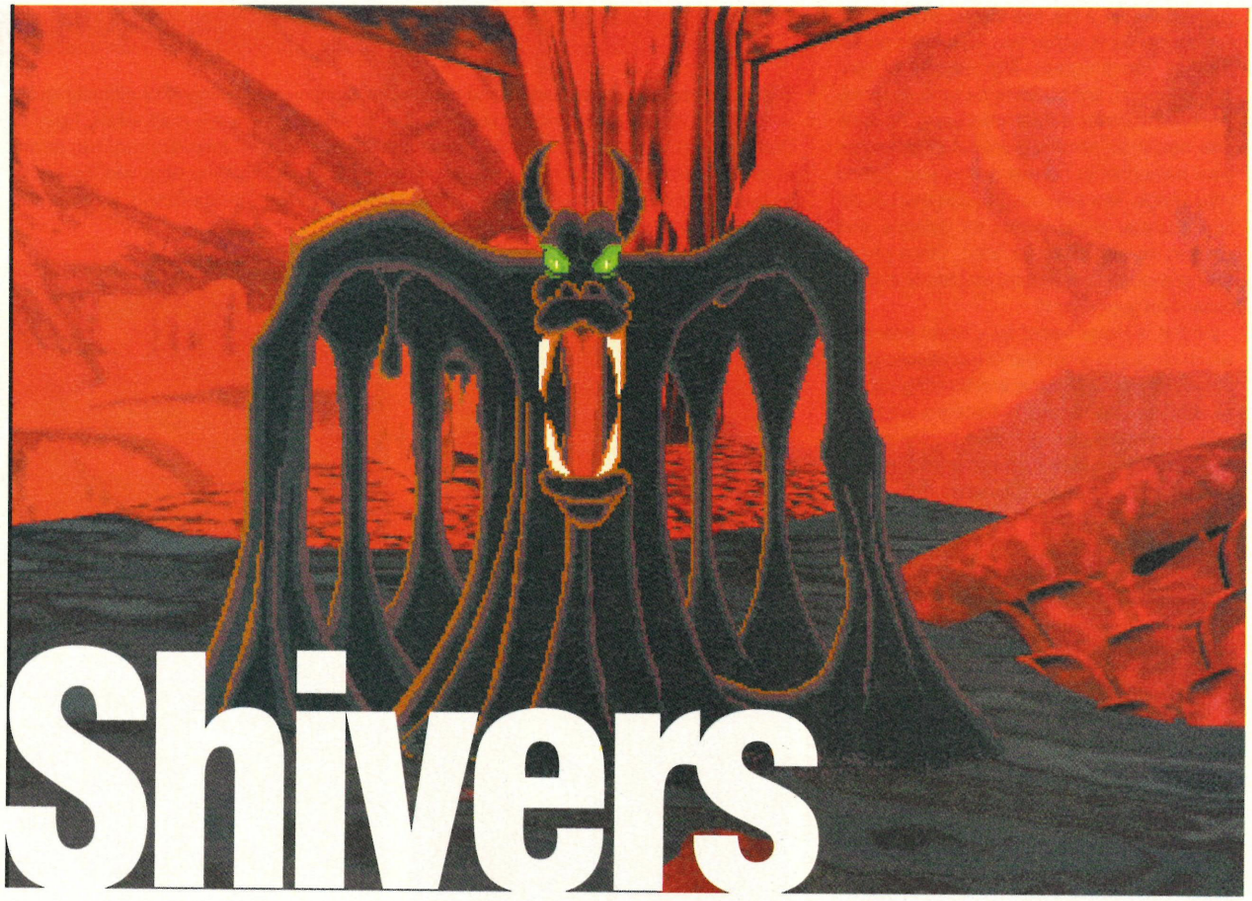
Type: *Arcade strategy*
Publisher: *Zablac Entertainment*
Price: *£44.95*
Contact: *(01626) 332233*

A gripping head-to-head struggle from start to finish.

8



This is one of the nasty Ixupi that you must recapture and imprison, to prevent them taking over the world. Or something. ▶



Shivers

A much worse piece of timing is hard to imagine: this rendered, puzzle-based horror adventure hitting the shops scant weeks after the much-delayed and long-awaited arrival of Virgin's 11th Hour (reviewed last issue, rated 8), a rather superior rendered, puzzle-based horror adventure. But let us for the moment put all such thoughts from our minds, and judge Shivers on its merits — or otherwise...

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33MHz 486, Win 3.1, mouse

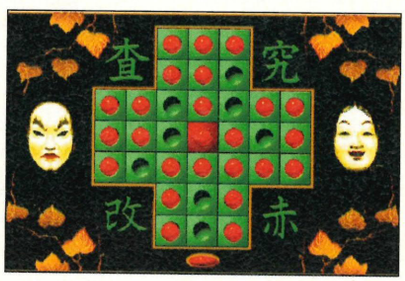
Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Windows comp cards

A resounding cheer is heard as Pat Fox gets locked up and the key is thrown away.

The story casts you in the role of a foolish small-town teenager, locked in a haunted museum overnight on a dare. Strange stories are told of the museum and so, in true schlock-horror movie tradition you make the rather ill-advised decision to explore the museum and pass the time until dawn. Once inside, you discover a complicated story about broken pots and escaped demons, and it transpires that in order to survive to see the sun rise, you must not only solve the puzzles that are dotted around the museum but also collect these pots and recapture the meanies.



A puzzle, yesterday. If you know Chinese Checkers, then this won't take you long. ▶

Gone potty

There's no faulting the look of the game — the museum has been beautifully modelled in 3DStudio style, with lots to look at as you wander about trying to find out what's going on. Unfortunately, it's all let down by the most important element — the puzzles. There aren't enough of them for a start, and apart from one or two, they simply aren't challenging enough. When, after having searched high and low, you finally do find a puzzle to tax your brain, it's a let-down when you manage to complete it within a couple of minutes. By far the most time-consuming element of the game is matching the pots with their lids, because you can't actually carry more than one item at a time — meaning you have to try to remember where you left everything, or else traipse all over the place trying to find it again.

Had it been released a couple of months sooner, Shivers might have stolen a little of 11th Hour's thunder, but to be honest it doesn't really stand up to comparison. Having said that, I would recommend this as a game for younger teenagers, since the plot is much less violent and the puzzles less challenging than Virgin's product.



▲ Some of the graphical detail is truly impressive — this lion-fountain is a particularly pretty example.

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....*Puzzle-based adventure*

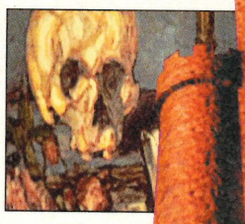
Publisher:.....*Sierra*

Price: *£37.99*

Contact: .....*(01734) 303322*

By no means bad, but can't really match up to 11th Hour.

6



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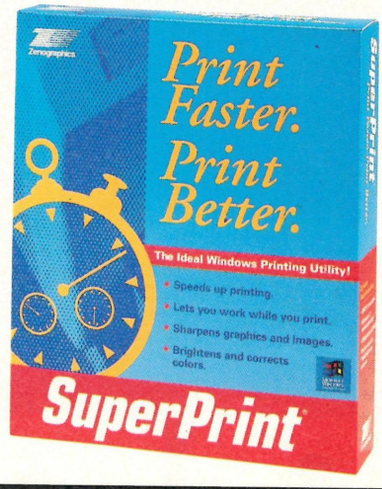
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†4MB PhotoCD output to HP DeskJet 560C; HP driver version 4.1; SuperPrint version 3.1; computer: 486DX-33

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Great Naval Battles 4

Yet another GNB sequel slides down the slipway as Simon Shaw decides that he has only just got the hang of the last one. This is getting more frequent than Rocky...

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 386 33Mhz

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

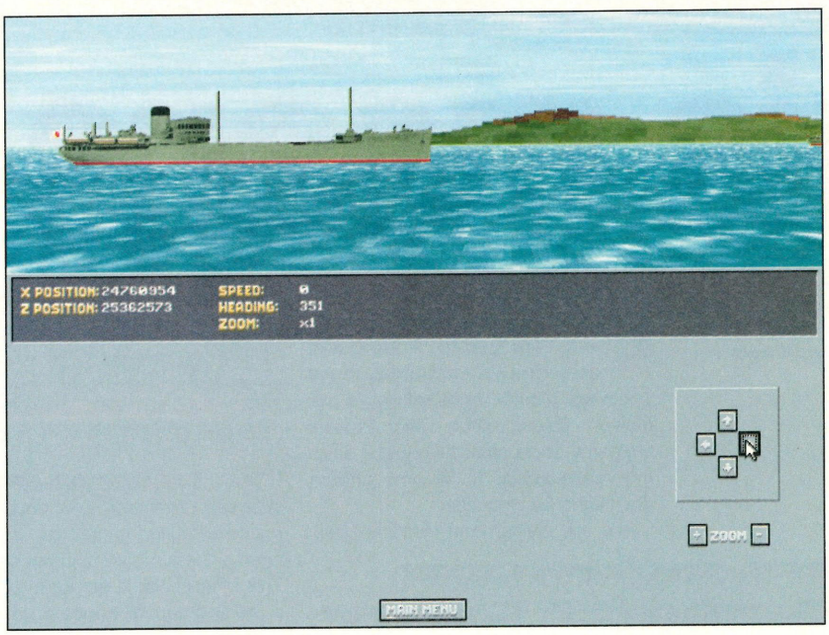
Sound: Sound Blaster compatible

To all of you still wading your way through GNB3 (and there was a lot to wade through) I have to say straight away DON'T PANIC! GNB4 makes a few cosmetic adjustments, but nothing in the basic engine is superseded. In fact, GNB4 is really a souped-up scenario pack, and it might have been slightly more honestly described as such.

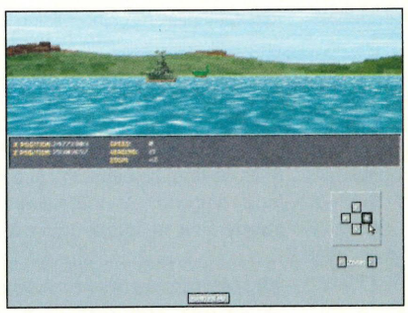
SSI has brought its superb naval strategy cycle full circle. GNB4 returns us to where it all started, with Hood versus Bismarck and the final flourishes of grand capital ship action. There are also scenarios dealing with the Mediterranean and, perhaps most interestingly, with the Russian war at sea. Aircraft carriers naturally get a look-in, but the emphasis is vastly different from the Pacific theatre, and the limited effects of airpower perhaps makes for a cleaner, simpler game.

So what are the cosmetic adjustments? Principally they consist of a tactical view panel, which helps to make the map-based action cosmetically better but is hardly essential; an expanded order of battle; and a random battle generator. Other features such as radar and submarines also get to make their maiden voyage in the Atlantic. All this will be welcome to the dedicated naval nut.

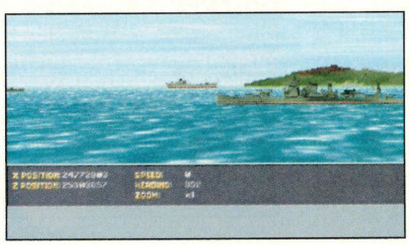
New players, however, should not start here, and nor, indeed, should any wargaming novice. Taken together, the GNB series is the most thorough and challenging naval simulation available. It's not as realistic as Harpoon 2, but it's a damn sight more playable. That said, it's far from being the salty equivalent of Panzer General, so unless you're a committed armchair admiral don't even think about it. SSI assures us that GNB4 really is going to be the last in the series. It's not exactly a must-have purchase, but fans won't be disappointed.



◀ *The gunnery controls have barely changed from the far-off days of the original GNB. The new scenarios include a recreation of the Battle of the River Plate.*



◀ *The view from the Flagbridge shows a new, improved action panel. Other Flagbridge functions are as per usual.*



▲ *Carrier action is limited, but land-based bombers pack a hefty punch so use your scouts for spotting threats.*

PCR VERDICT

Type: .....Strategy

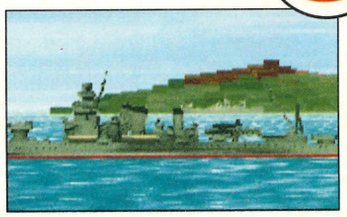
Publisher: .....Mindscape

Price: £44.99

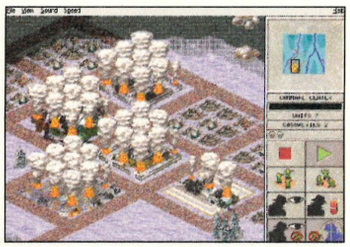
Contact: .....(01444) 246333

Admirably carries on a naval tradition. The last piece in the GNB jigsaw.

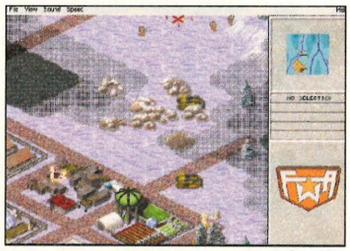
8







▲ *Bugger! The enemy has infiltrated your headquarters, planting explosives throughout the base. Smoke billows from the base.*



▲ *At last, you've got the heavy tank! This beast is one of the best weapons in your arsenal and as such takes a lot of resources.*

This means War!

▲ *Revenge! The enemy may have tiny prop-driven bombers but you've developed the jet fighter! The tables have turned, now it's your turn to cause death from above. Hoorah.*

MicroProse declares war with its Command & Conquer clone. Alex Simmons reports from the front lines.

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery then Command & Conquer is well and truly flattered. Many things are copied, from Oasis' obsession with the Beatles to the countless 'tributes' to id Software's hallowed Doom, but MicroProse's wargame bears more than just a passing resemblance to Virgin's brilliant Command & Conquer!

The two are far from identical twins, however. In terms of concept there's very little difference between them, in This Means War! the basic process of building up an army before engaging in combat being similar to that of Command & Conquer. Both use fairly simple point-and-click interfaces, that allow orders to be issued to the troops with speed and ease. What's more, as each skirmish is won progress across the globe is made, a feature shared by both games. Then of course there's the obvious visual similarities. But bearing all this in mind, This Means War! is still a very different game to play.



◀ *She may be cute but she's not a patch on the rendered cutscenes in Command & Conquer. Appearing at the start of each mission, she details all your primary objectives.*

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486 66MHz

Minimum memory: 6Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Sound Blaster & comp

Man management

Whereas Command & Conquer is primarily an action game, resource management is a more important aspect of This Means War!'s gameplay. Creating a small group of troops and tanks is easy enough to begin with but when raw materials run dry, mining facilities and refineries must be built to provide more resources. To construct factories you obviously need engineers, who must be fed to ensure they work at their peak performance. Therefore there must be enough farms to cope with the food demand. At the same time a steady flow of troops must be maintained, so more barracks are constructed which means more engineers are needed... and so it goes on. Like Sim City, success comes from building up your empire, slowly adding to your initial cluster of buildings, rather than wasting resources by creating a tiny army and then watch production grind to a complete halt.

Then, of course, there's the combat aspect of This Means War! to worry about. Command & Conquer is a frantic struggle to victory by outgunning and outflanking the enemy. This Means War!, on the other hand, drifts along at a more relaxed pace. In other words, it's just a tad slow. This is partly due to the fact that it's not as immediately accessible as Command & Conquer because of the icon-driven interface which takes some time to master.

Unlike C&C, in which troops are simply highlighted and then ordered to either move or attack, units are con-



▲ *The range of each unit is shown by the red circle that surrounds them. If the enemy is not in range, your troops will close for the kill.*



▲ *At the beginning of the mission most of the landscape is covered in a veil of darkness. Send out scout troops to reveal more.*



▲ ***Like Command & Conquer, multiple units can be selected by 'dragging' the cursor over your troops. This obviously allows you to control your army with speed and ease.***

▲ ***Enemy aircraft fly overhead, showering your troops with bombs. Nip across to the factory, churn out a couple of anti-aircraft guns and pepper the skies with flak.***

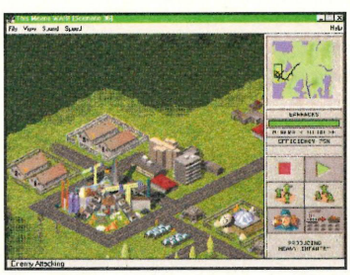
trolled using the menus on the right of the screen. Although slightly more cumbersome, these icons give the player greater control of their units. For example, light infantry can be ordered to move or engage a specific target, as well as told to fire at will and even retreat, eliminating the nearest target or running for cover respectively. Additionally, specialised units, such as armoured personnel carriers and aircraft, can be issued unit-specific orders — scout troops can discreetly follow the enemy (thus revealing the location of their HQ) and engineers have the ability to construct bridges across rivers. Spies can infiltrate enemy lines, bringing back any technology they've developed, while combat bikes and other fast moving vehicles are perfect for uncovering the terrain which is, at first, covered in darkness à la Command & Conquer.

For better or worse

Compared to C&C's meagre 24 missions, This Means War! offers a staggering 40 scenarios. They're surprisingly varied, with factors such as primary objectives, terrain type and the resources available changing constantly throughout the game. The gradual introduction of new troops, vehicles and weapons ensures interest is held from beginning to end, as finally building the impressive heavy battle tank is almost as satisfying as winning the battle itself!

Command & Conquer has the edge when it comes presentation though. Okay This Means War! is more detailed, largely due to the benefits of SVGA, but C&C has more character.

This Means War! isn't quite so encompassing, and lacks the meaty explosions and gunfire (and of course the speed) that made C&C so tense and exciting to play. The cutscenes are disappointing too, its grainy video clips pale in comparison to the atmospheric rendered sequences in C&C.



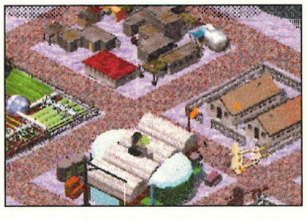
▲ ***Highlighting the barracks allows you to 'build' more troops, providing you have enough resources to do so of course.***

PCR VERDICT

Type: ..... *Strategy*
Publisher: ..... *Microprose*
Price: *£44.99*
Contact: ..... *(01454) 326532*

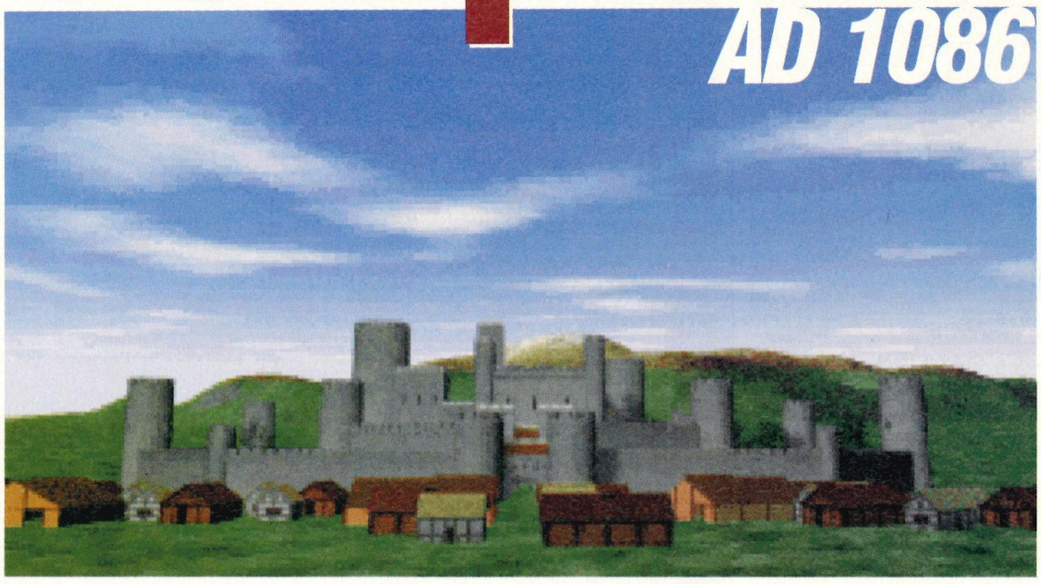
Not as exciting as Command & Conquer, but every bit as addictive.

8



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Conqueror AD 1086



You've just turned 18, you've got raging acne and no woman will touch you. What do you do next? If your ambitions include a comfy semi in Stoke Newington, a Ford Orion and a season ticket to the Arsenal, this game isn't for you. If you want to slay dragons, woo damsels and conquer medieval England — all before you turn 30 — then read on.

Conqueror offers you two kinds of game. You can either build up an army, bully your way through the shires and kick the King off his throne, or you can leave the army to your trusted captain, gain a reputation at tournaments and become King's Champion by slaying the dreaded dragon. It's not a rigid structure. You can try your hand at most things whichever choice you make.

You start with meagre resources, a few witless serfs and an uncultivated stretch of land. Your serfs are willing to work in farming, mining, forestry management, castle-building and a variety of village industries. You can also train them for use in your army: once you've built a strong economy you can send your troops into battle against your enemies.

Yet, besides all this, apart from some interesting 3D combat sequences, Conqueror is disappointing — it's a mediocre mixture of strategy and fighting with no real surprises. The characters and speech are predictable, the presentation is clumsy and the control system is far from intuitive. If strategy is important for you, there's plenty of depth and half a dozen difficulty levels here to keep you busy. But if you prefer arcade action, you won't find much to excite you.

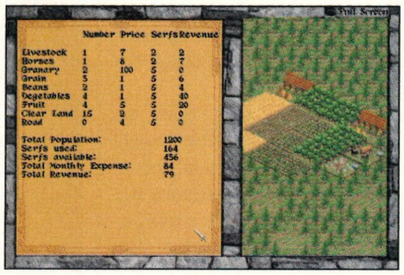
CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486SX, CD ROM drive

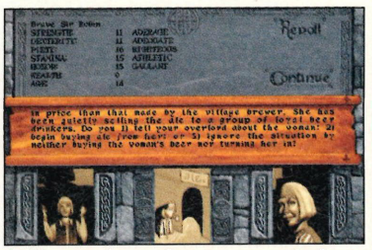
Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

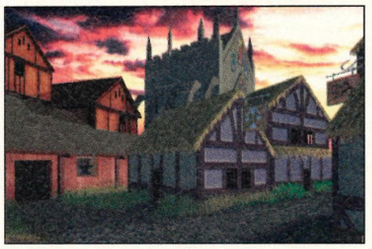
Sound: S'blaster, ProAudio Spectrum



▲ *Planting crops, building a castle, raising an army or managing timber are the key to initial success. Those boring home economics classes were useful after all.*



▲ *Choose from six pre-generated characters or make up your own to become the best knight in England.*



▲ *Your career begins in the village, where there's an inn, blacksmith, church and a money-lender.*



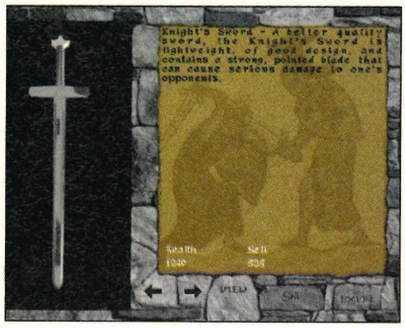
▲ *The tactical map lets you study the basic strengths and weaknesses of every knight in England.*



▲ *When you get bored of tactical planning it's time to go forth and clobber someone with your sword. Alternatively, you can go a-jousting, storm a rival lord's castle or engage in all-out war.*

Egad! Olde Englande is in turmoil again. Gordon Houghton sallies forth to the shires.

Hardware fans will love the blacksmith's shop. It has over 40 different kinds of weapon, shield and armour — including a dozen nasty swords. ▼



PCR VERDICT

Type: *Medieval adventure*

Publisher: *Sierra*

Price: *£29.99*

Contact: *(01734) 303322*

Run-of-the-mill mix of strategy and arcade action.

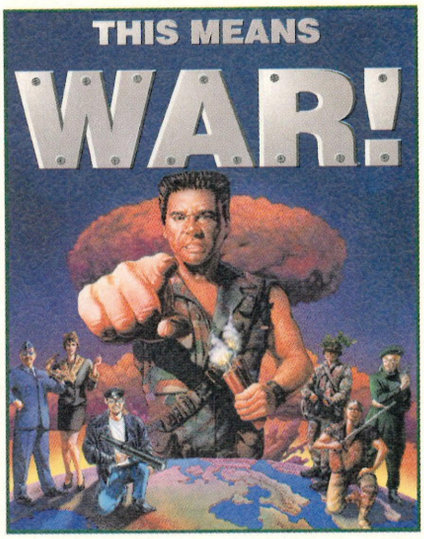
5



WAR IS HELL!

IT'S YOU VERSUS THE WORLD - OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT!

A hideously addictive computer game has infested the world's computers with a virus that has destroyed all power output and made all active nuclear reactors meltdown and explode. This is the Apocalypse that's the starting point for THIS MEANS WAR! MicroProse's latest all-action battle strategy game.



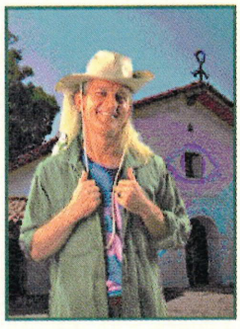
Played in easy-to-use Windows interface THIS MEANS WAR! has high quality 3-D isometric view graphics including the largest selection of objects to build and deploy ever seen in a game of this type. THIS MEANS WAR! is easy to control - which is just as well considering the amount of real-time action that takes place.

Get the logistics right and you can reduce the opposing Command Centre to rubble. Get the logistics wrong and you'll watch on helplessly as marines, heavy infantry, biker gangs, jet fighters, and hovercraft tanks tear into your HQ. We all know that 'War Is Hell' but THIS MEANS WAR! is one hell of a game.

It's toy soldiers gone ballistic (yes, you even get ICBMs to deploy!)

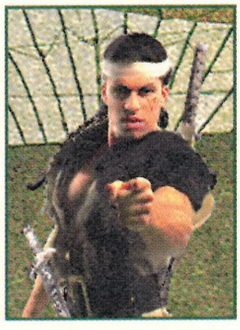


At first, the game area is small with limited objectives. Orders come from Commander Clarke (at first quite severe but later on literally letting her hair down) - who keeps you informed of what's going on in the war; who's attacking or allying with who. She also gives you pointers on what to build next. But, watch out - her signal may be jammed by some of your opponents!



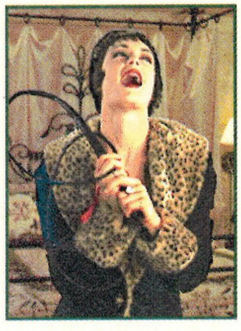
CROCODILE GHANDI

An absolute dictator of ancient biblical proportions and founder of the Church of Universal Siblinghood



MONDO KHAN

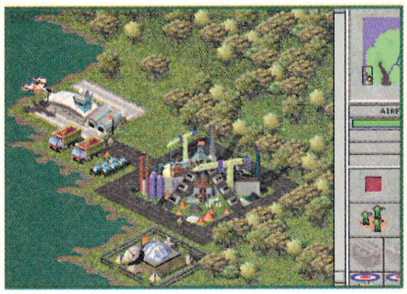
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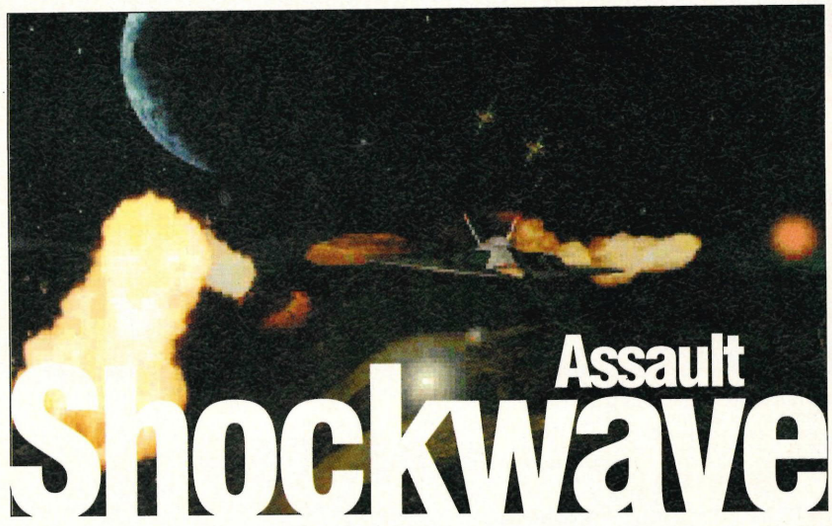
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Shockwave Assault

Oh great, another 3D shoot 'em up, just what the PC really needed. Originally a 3DO game, Shockwave Assault is an attempt at a Terminal Velocity-style blaster, with textured 3D landscapes, FMV cutscenes and plenty of mean old alien invaders to take pot shots at.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 66MHz 486DX2, Win 95

Minimum memory: 8Mb

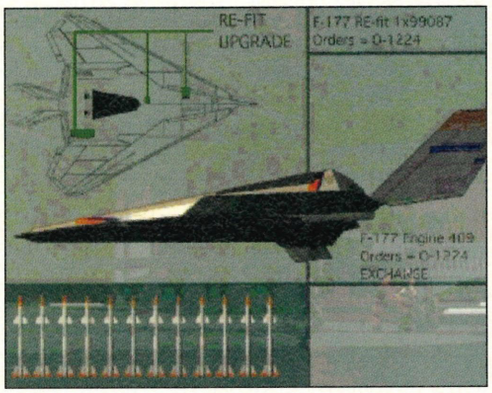
Minimum graphics: 1Mb SVGA

Sound: Wind 95 compatible cards

In the first part of the game — wait for it —

Pat Fox takes to the skies once more to save us all from death and destruction.

aliens are attacking the earth and have occupied certain areas of the world, and it's your job as hotshot rookie pilot to take them on and wipe them off the surface of the globe. The graphics are of the texture-mapped polygon variety, and the landscapes over which you fly have apparently been accurately mapped from real terrain data, but who cares? What's important is the feel of the action, and the game is notably lacking in the adrenaline-pumping, all-out speed rush that makes Terminal Velocity (reviewed issue 47 rated 8) so addictive. You trundle along at a fixed altitude, at a fixed speed, shooting at things and trying not to get shot, and hoping your weapons don't run out before you can refuel and re-arm — there are no extra weapons or power-ups to discover along the way.



▲ ***This is your thoroughly speedy ship. You have lasers and and a limited number of rockets to blast your way through the alien hordes.***

The game might have been saved by the addition of a multiplayer option, but there's nothing of the sort here. Sadly Shockwave Assault has virtually nothing to recommend it. The FMV cutscenes are nicely integrated, but that can't disguise the truth: Shockwave Assault was dire on the 3DO and it's dire on the PC. Shame.



▲ ***Zap! Bang! Yawn. The alien hordes do their best, but the thrill just isn't there.***

PCR VERDICT

Type: ..... *Shoot 'em up*

Publisher: ..... *Electronic Arts*

Price: *£44.99*

Contact: ..... *(01753) 549442*

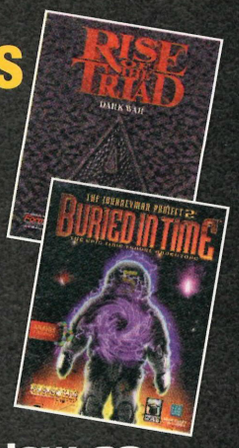
Why play this when you could be playing Terminal Velocity?

4



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Desktop Toys

Pat Fox thought he had time-wasting down to an art form. Then he got hold of Desktop Toys...



CD ONLY

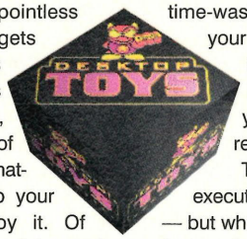
Minimum PC: 486 DX 33Mhz

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: VGA

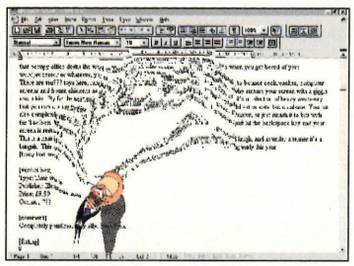
Sound: Windows sound cards

Desktop Toys is a strange beast, falling somewhere between a screensaver and one of those pointless executive gadgets that occupy office desks the world over. The idea is to make working more fun, so when you get bored of your wordprocessor or whatever, you can just call up your favourite toy and destroy it. Of course, you don't have to be doing work to enjoy it...

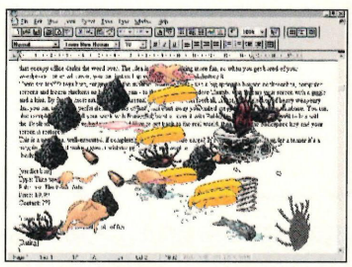


There are nine toys here, ranging from the sublime Desktop Splat — use a big spring to bounce cockroaches, computer screens and frozen chickens as high as you can — to the ridiculous Theodore Thumb, who smears your screen with a giggle and a kiss. By far the most satisfying is the arsenal: nothing to do with football, in fact it's a selection of heavy weaponry that you can use to perforate, incinerate or just plain blast away your hated spreadsheet or detested database. You can also completely rub out all your work with Eraser Ed, paint all over it with Pablo the Painter, or just smash it to bits with the Toolbox. Finally there's Nid and Pid the Gravity Kids, Foton the Hero and Space Cruiser Attack, all of which are suitably silly and time-wasting. When you've had your fun and have to get back to the real world, then just hit the backspace key and your screen is miraculously restored.

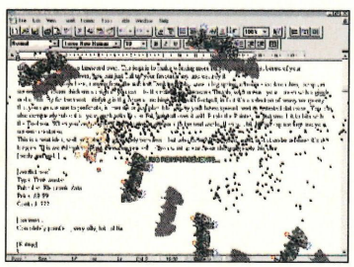
This is a neat idea, well-executed, if completely pointless — but who cares? It's a good laugh, and at under a tenner, it's a bargain. This would make a great Christmas present — if you want to start your shopping early this year.



▲ ***There's no two ways about it, Theodore Thumb is strange.***



▲ ***Bounce things around and make them explode with Splat!***



▲ ***Aliens invade your desktop and shoot your work. Hurray!***

PCR VERDICT

Type: ..... *Time waster*

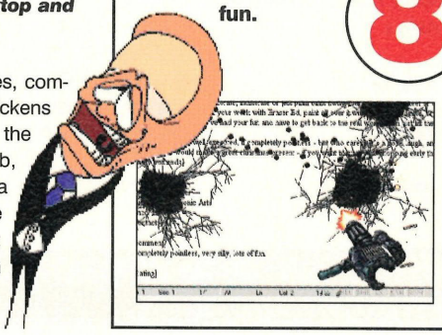
Publisher: ..... *Electronic Arts*

Price: *£9.99*

Contact: ..... *(01753) 549442*

Completely pointless, very silly, lots of fun.

8



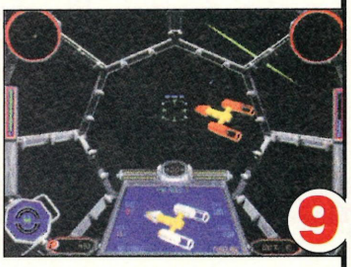
shorts

Tie Fighter Collector's CD-ROM

Space combat

Get in touch with your dark side in this compilation of LucasArts' smash hit space combat game — pilot all sorts of Tie craft, from the weedy Tie Fighter itself up to the indestructible Tie Defender, against those accursed Rebel forces. The original game scored an excellent eight out of 10 back in issue 35, but here you get not just the original, but also the Defender of the Empire and an extra campaign entitled Enemies of the Empire — and all in hi-res too. If you haven't played it yet then do so now, or be open to ridicule.

Virgin ● £49.99 ● (0171) 3682255 ● 66Mhz 486DX2, VGA, 8Mb, dual speed CD-ROM

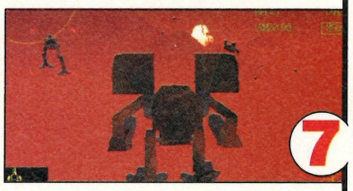


Mech Warrior 2 Expansion Pack

Combat simulation

The battlemechs are back! If you didn't get enough of those lovable, armour-plated walking tanks in the original Mech Warrior 2 (reviewed issue 48, rated 7), then there's more where that came from. The Ghost Bear Clan has been attacked and is out for revenge, and with more than a dozen new missions, and even more new 'mechs, as well as new weapon options and mission settings, there's loads here to keep you going, if that's what turns you on. Don't forget you'll need a copy of the original game to make use of this expansion pack.

Activision ● £19.99 ● (0181) 742 9400 ● 66Mhz 486DX2, SVGA, 8Mb, MS-DOS 6.0 or above.

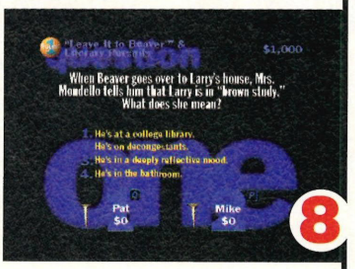


You Don't Know Jack

Quiz game

We really wanna see those fingers... with You Don't Know Jack you can take part in a real-time, really funny American-style trivia quiz show. The questions are firmly grounded in the surreal and adult tradition. The whole thing is beautifully presented, with slick graphics, great sound and continuous narration by a wisecracking American guy who makes sarcastic comments and insults the contestants. The one minor flaw is that some of the questions are too specifically American, and therefore a bit obscure for non-US citizens. But otherwise, it's crude, childish and absolutely brilliant.

Focus Multimedia ● £29.95 ● (01889) 583571 ● 33Mhz 486, SVGA, 8Mb, Windows 3.1 or 95



Alone in the Dark Trilogy

Adventure compilation

Revolutionary a few years back and still pretty damned good, the Alone in the Dark Trilogy is an impressive collection. Each one is a self-contained story of ghosts and things that go bump: AITD 1 (reviewed issue 14, rated 9) is set in a big mansion; in AITD 2 (reviewed issue 28 rated 9) you're embroiled with pirates; and finally in AITD 3 (reviewed issue 40, rated 8) you're stranded in a truly ghostly wild west. Individually they were excellent: tense and very challenging. As a compilation, this is essential for all adventure fans.

Infogrames ● £44.99 ● (0171) 738 8199 ● 33Mhz 386, VGA, 4Mb, MS-DOS v5.0 or above



Brain Busters

Let's face it, we're not all completely unbeatable at all games. In fact, most of us are a bit bobbins really, so what better for us than the occasional cheat or two to help us get along?

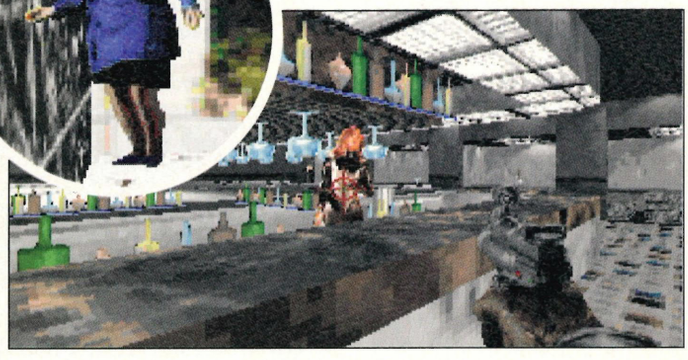
TEKWAR

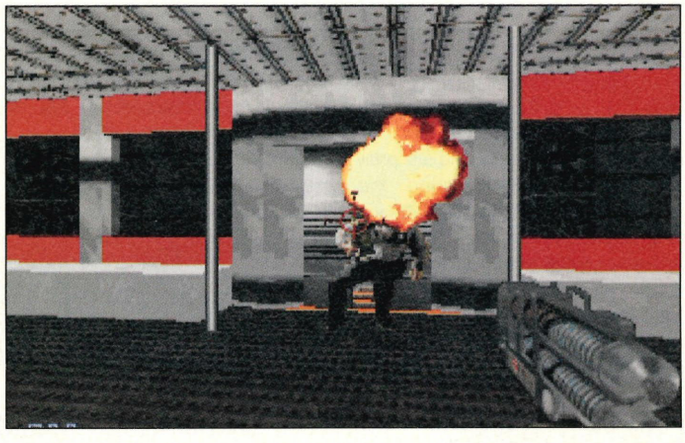
So you're having problems with the wigmeister general, William Shatner's Tekwar game then. Don't worry, here's a few codes that may just sort you out... During the game, just press NUM LOCK, and you'll be awarded invulnerability. The following codes are entered when starting up the game (ie. TEKD1 NOENEMIES):

NOENEMIES	Removes everyone but you.
NOGUARD	Removes the guards from the game.
NOCHASE	Removes the shooting enemies from the game.
NOSTROLL	Removes the innocent bystanders from the game.









TYRIAN

We featured the shareware version of this superlative shoot-em-up on our December '95 cover disk. The codes that follow will work with both the version that appeared on our PC Review cover disc and, of course, with the registered version. Type in the cheat on the main title screen (the menu select screen), and you'll be given a different ship with which to play in the arcade mode.

TECHNO	Experimental PQZ
STORMWIND	Stormwind - The Elemental
UNKNOWN	TX SilverCloud
ENEMY	Captured U-Fighter
WEIRD	Foodship Nine
STEALTH	Ninja Star
NORTSHIPZ	Nort-Ship Z
DESTRUCT	Will access a completely different secret game that's a bit like Scorched Earth and Worms.

Also, pressing G when selecting Difficulty Level will enable the Impossible difficulty level, and pressing } will enable the Suicide difficulty level.

CRUSADER: NO REMORSE

This bizarre isometric mech-based game can get a wee bit tricky on occasions, so here's a pig pen load of cheats to help you out. Type these during the game. You have to type the first one before any of the others.

JASSICA16	Enable Cheats
CTRL-F10	Enable Immortality
F10	Get more weapons, max out energy, and get all items
H	Hacker mover (Hold down shift, then click and drag an object)

When starting up the game type any of these after the game's start-up name (remembering to include a space between the name and the command line parameter):

-warp x (where x is a #)	Warp to level x
-skill x	Change default skill level to x (useful when using -warp)
-egg 250	Weapons room cheat (must be used with -warp)
-?	Displays message "You DO need help!"
-asylum	Displays message "Enabling ENHANCED mode. (Not!)"
-demo	Continuously loop intro

QUICK TIP: To get a refill on ammo just drop the weapon you're using and pick it up again.

MECHWARRIOR 2

We get so many queries about this superb Battletech-inspired war sim that it's time for us to give you the complete list of cheat codes. Now you don't have to 'phone us anymore.

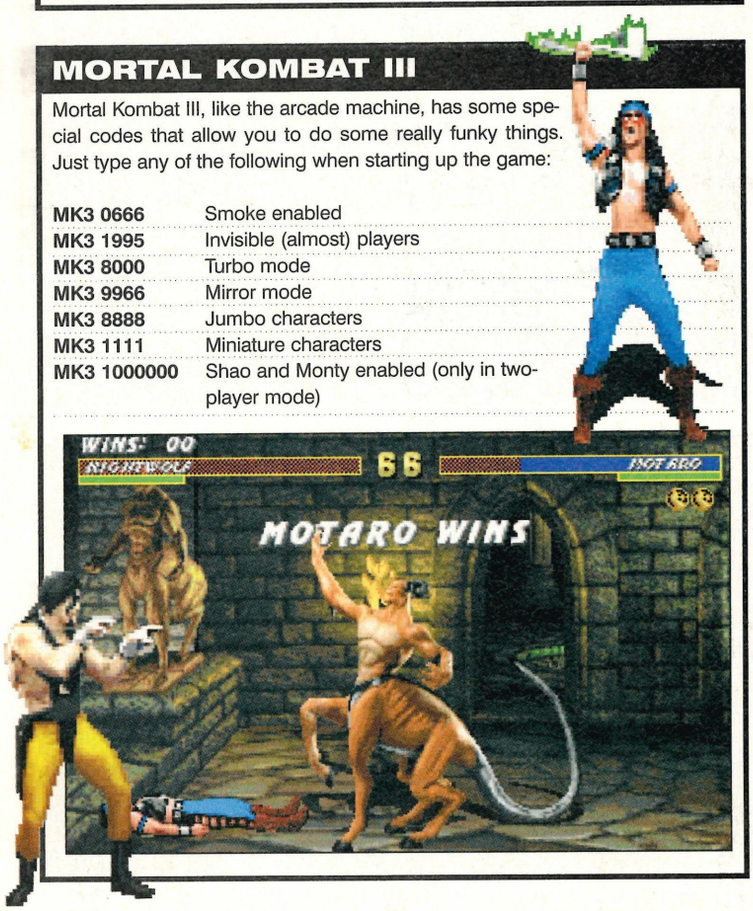
cia	Unlimited ammo
coldmiser	Heat tracking off
dorcs	Meet the DORCS!
enolagay	Nuke, one time use during simulation.
tlofront	Rear view camera becomes a front camera.
icanthackit	End mission
idkfa	Different means as icanthackit, but same result.
meepmeep	Time compression key enabled
unmeepmeep	Time Compression Off
michelin	See the bounding spheres on debris and mech parts
mightymouse	Unlimited jumpjets
xray	X-Ray vision. Same as Enhance Imaging but you can see through walls/mountains press "w" once to disable it and remain in Enhance Imaging Mode.
zmak	Time expansion enabled
blorb	Invulnerability
tinkerbell	Free-floating external cameras, press "C" to Disable



MORTAL KOMBAT III

Mortal Kombat III, like the arcade machine, has some special codes that allow you to do some really funky things. Just type any of the following when starting up the game:

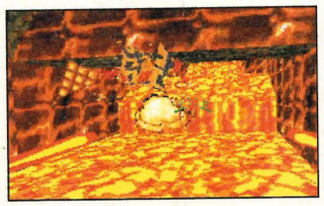
MK3 0666	Smoke enabled
MK3 1995	Invisible (almost) players
MK3 8000	Turbo mode
MK3 9966	Mirror mode
MK3 8888	Jumbo characters
MK3 1111	Miniature characters
MK3 1000000	Shao and Monty enabled (only in two-player mode)



DESCENT 2

Here are the first three codes we've discovered that work with the demo version of this extraordinarily good, but tough, sequel. Enter them during the game.

GABBAGABBAHEY	Lose all but 1% of shields and energy
ERICAANNE	Bouncing Weapons!
BITTERSWEET	Psychedelic walls





MAGIC CARPET 2

Yep, even the mighty MC2 has cheat codes. During the game, press I and then type WINDY followed by Enter.
You can now use these keys:

Alt-F1	Access all spells
Alt-F2	More mana
Alt-F3	Destroy all players
Alt-F4	Destroy all castles
Alt-F5	Destroy all balloons
Alt-F6	Heal
Alt-F7	Kill all creatures
Alt-F8	More Spell Experience Points
Alt-F9	Free Spell Usage ON/OFF
Alt-F10	Invincibility ON/OFF
Shift-D	Complete current objective
Shift-C	Complete level

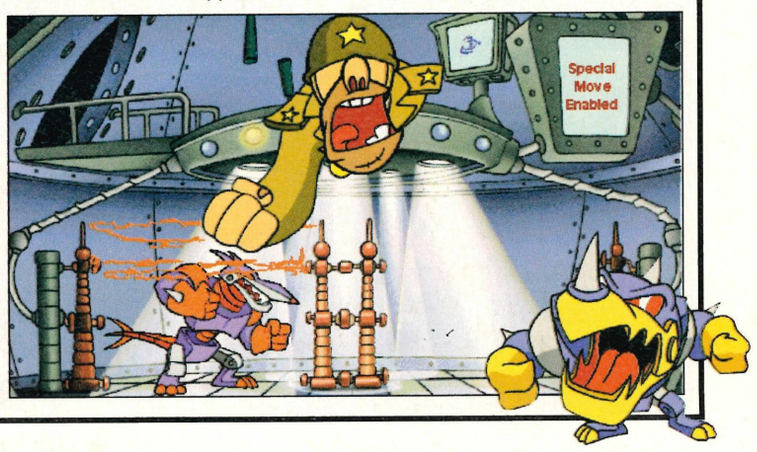


BATTLE BEASTS

C'mon, you've got to be kidding. If you need help on this very easy beat-em-up you must be very poo-er indeed. Ho well, here's some cheats anyway...
Firstly type this ultimate cheat code on the order form screen, then type any of the following:

YOYOYO	Ultimate Cheat Code.
ITIHFO	Fight 3 rounds instead of just one
ERHNE	Fight all the characters instead of one
AOFREOIO	Opens all bonus doors
OFOVH	2X in bonus rooms
ERHYHRLY	Makes the Toadman Weaker
OAOAEIOA	Autofly Mode in lab
EATEE	Morphing disabled
OIVNNFOF	Tadpoles attacking in lab enabled
EHRTRR	Autofly In bonus rooms enabled

Make sure you RESET all the cheats before you play a new game, unless you want the same cheats applied!

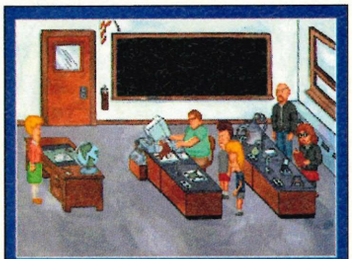


Beavis and Butt-head in virtual stupidity



Let's face it, if Beavis and Butt-head themselves were playing this game they'd be cheating all over the shop, so why should you stick to the rules? Exactly — which is why we've got together this rather helpful guide to making your way through Beavis and Butt-heads' quite mad-cap world. Mind you, we thought it'd be far too easy to just give you the entire solution, (and anyway, this is the sort of game that needs to be explored, just for comedy purposes alone) so here's a guide that should help you along, without having to point out the obvious.

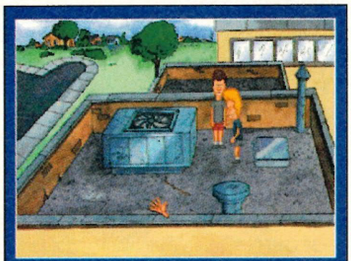
The following is all laid out in location form, and will show you what objects to collect in each (and tell you what they do).



1 Highland High

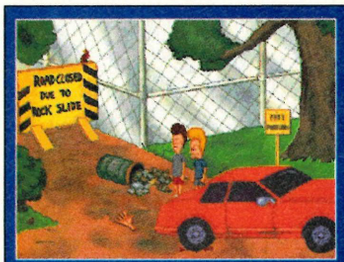
Hall pass: in classroom (show it to the teacher and she'll let you out of the classroom)

Car Keys: in Gina's locker, number '69' (use them in Todd's car).



2 On the roof of Highland High

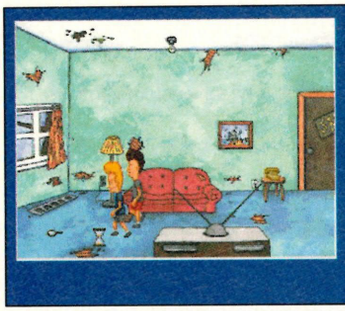
Stick: on floor (wedge the stick in the fan to get an escape route off the roof, which you need when you've completed 'Hock-A-Loogie').



3 The park

Flyer for "Save The Whale": in garbage can after it's knocked over (will get you into Coffee Shop during the demonstration).

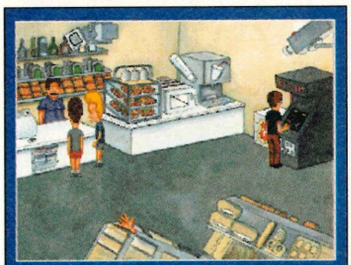
Dead Squirrel: found underneath the car wheel, can only be picked up with the spatula and hammer combo (take it to the taxidermist and she'll stuff it for you. Then give it to the janitor in the school to get rid of him so that you can then go into the school gym and fall through the floor into the boiler room).



4 The flat

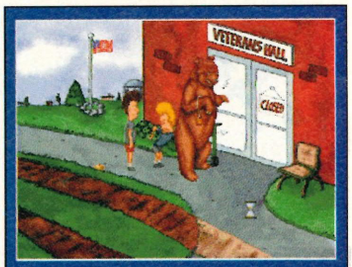
Magnifying glass: on floor (used to play 'Bug Justice' — not important but fun).

Quarter: down grate, can only be picked up with the string and gum (use in the condom machine in the toilets at the coffee shop to, er, buy a condom basically).



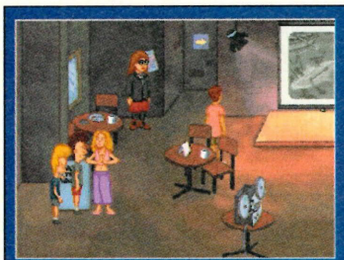
5 The shop

There's nothing to collect that's actually important for solving puzzles here, but you need to try to grab some nachos when the old bloke from the Veteran's Hall is in there, otherwise he'll not offer you a job.



6 The veteran's hall

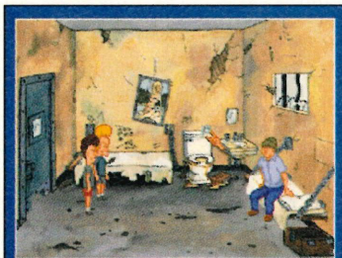
Barn Door Remote: up the bear's back passage. After you've kicked him a couple of times it'll dislodge and Beavis will be able to get it (use it on the barn door to open it).



7 Coffee shop

Poetry Book: on table in the far corner (give to the guy under the bed in the jail cell, and he'll give you a clue as to what type of poetry he actually likes).

Note: picking up the coffee is also essential as this will turn Beavis into Cornholio and let you into the tank.



8 Jail cell

Toilet Paper: on the sink (give to the guy under the bed)

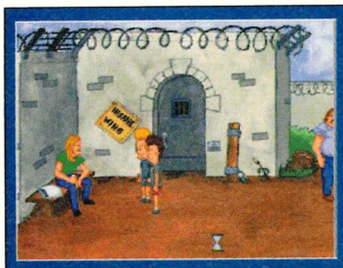
Soap: on the sink (give it to Beavis and he'll attempt to eat it, and leave it in a precarious place on the floor).

Keys: Guard drops onto floor when he treads on the soap (they er... unlock the door, allowing you to escape from your cell into the courtyard, hurrah!).

Flashbulb: on floor, after the guy under the bed spits it out (fix it to the camera).

False Teeth: on floor, after the guy has read the Book of Ditties (give to the farmer at the farm and he'll bugger off allowing you to get to the barn with the car).





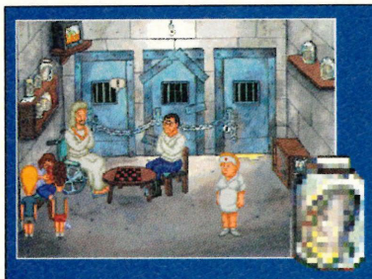
9 The courtyard

Pillow: next to Kyler, the coin-spinning psychopath (give the pillow to the fellow under the bed in the jail cell, and he'll try to eat it. He'll then spit out the Camera Flashbulb)

Towel: beside the lady guard (use it back in the gym on Beavis when he refuses to climb any further up the rope).

Quarter: on floor after you've flashed the camera at Kyler (give it to the other guy in the cell).





10 The insane wing

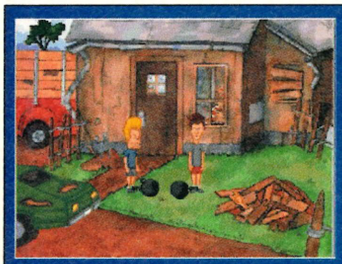
Letter Blocks: on the cabinet (give to the guy under the bed in the cell).

Teddy Bear: on the cabinet (give to the guy under the bed in the cell).

The Camera: on the cabinet (once the bulb has been affixed take a picture of Kyler — he'll go mental).

Electroshock Therapy Machine: in the cabinet (use on the Guard's chair outside the prison to make him scarper).

Book of Ditties: the one-eyed man will give it to you when you give him the Snake Eye (give it to the guy under the bed in the cell).



11 Outside the slaughter house

Piece of wood: on pile of wood (use it on the leg irons twice and Beavis will be rescued).

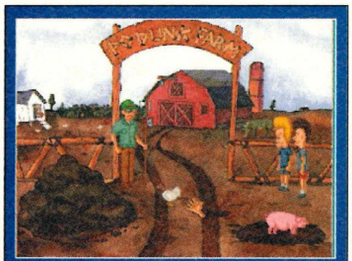
Clippers: will collect them automatically after releasing Beavis (use them on Butt-head's leg irons, and then use them on the dog chain outside the jail gates after giving him the condom doggy).

Todd's License Plate: lying on ground (use it on the car in the barn, after you've taken the last plate off).

Inside the slaughter house

Steak: lying on floor (give it to the dog outside the jail).

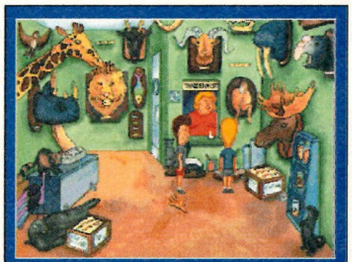
Axe: spat out after turning on mincing machine after fiddling with the knob (have Beavis use it on the rope in the gym after he's climbed to the top. It'll allow you to crash through the floor).



12 The farm

Although there's nothing to collect here at all, it's worth trying to "interact' with all the animals. There's a few Deliverance references to be discovered, that are pretty amusing.



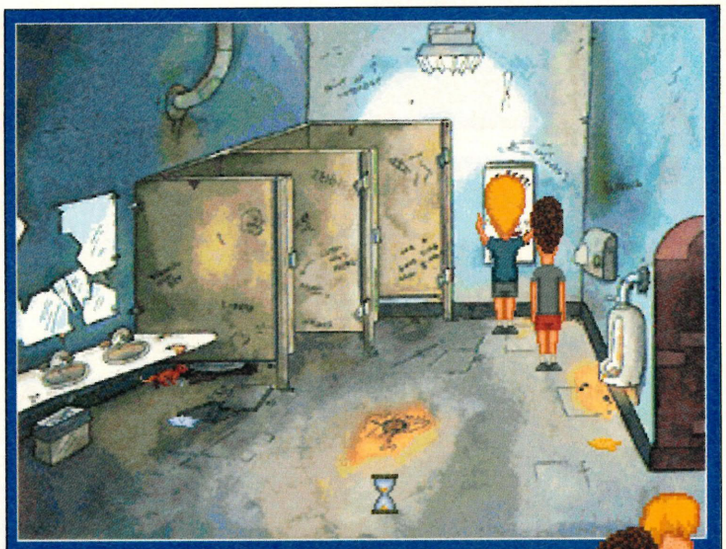


13 The taxidermist

Pen: sitting on the counter (scribble on the sign in the park next to the car).

String: found when trying to grab the rabbit (use it with the gum)

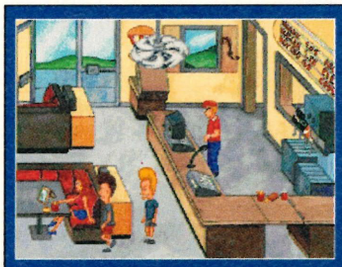
Snake Eye: in box (give to the guy with only one eye in the Insane Wing in the jail).



14 Toilets at the coffee shop

Condom: drops out of machine, when you put a quarter in it (get it blown up at the gas station using the air pump next to the gas pumps, then give it to the janitor in the school who makes it into a balloon doggy. Give the balloon doggy to the real dog outside the jail and he'll burst it after you've cut his chain with the clippers, and it'll make him run away from you). Good dog, now...



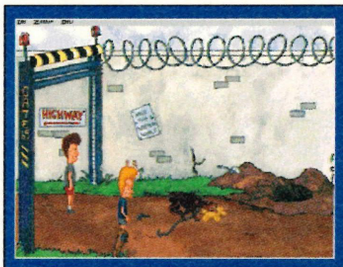


15 Burger World

Hamburger: at Gina's table (use it on the ceiling fan to get rid of the assistant).

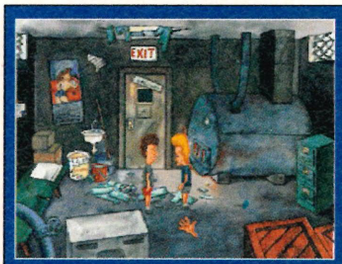
Assorted Food: on counter (use them on the ceiling fan).

Spatula: on the counter in the back (to scrape up the flat squirrel in the park when used with the hammer).



16 Gate outside the jail

Hammer: left on floor when dog disappears (use hammer to smack the spatula after it has stuck underneath the dead squirrel to spring the poor squashed animal into the air, allowing you to pick it up with your bare hands and take it to the Taxidermist).



17 The boiler room at Highland High

Can Of Paint: by the sink (paint the car in the barn with this to disguise it so the rozzers won't nick you).

Locker Combination File Folder: in the filing cabinet (use it on Gina's locker, number '69' to open it and you'll be able to get the car keys).

So that's it, not the entire solution but if you need any more you truly are a dillweed. One note: interact with everyone and everything — if it's not a clue at least you'll be treated with some top comedy.



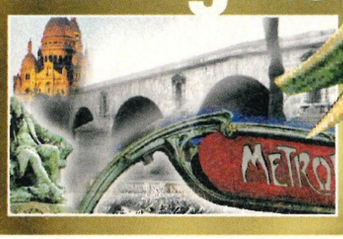
'Thanks to Charlton Heston, this month you can relive all those RE lessons you took at school. Or get wet in Microsoft Oceans, get lost in Paris or even get fed with Schwartz.

Cal Jones

THE RATING SYSTEM EXPLAINED

PC Review gives marks out of 10 to rate multimedia products. The score takes into account elements such as presentation, ease of use and how well the subject is covered. We are strict on multimedia. Five is average, so anything rated higher is better than average and a product has to be extremely good to score a coveted eight or nine.

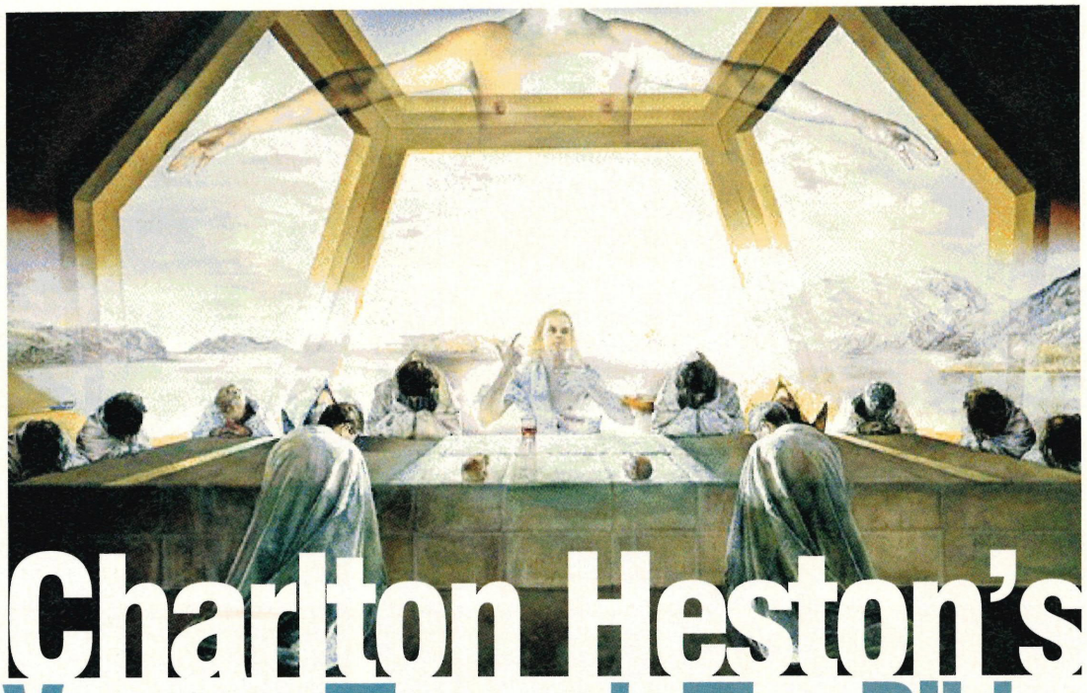
Highlights



Napoleon 104

Microsoft Oceans 106

Schwartz Cuisine 110



Charlton Heston's Voyage Through The Bible: New Testament

CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486DX, Windows 3.1

Minimum memory: 8Mb

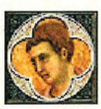
Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Win comp sound card

There are three things you need to know about this release before we go on. First of all, the title is slightly misleading: Charlton Heston's Voyage Through The Gospels would have been more accurate, since half of the New Testament from Acts to Revelation is hardly mentioned. Secondly, it has the longest title of anything I've ever reviewed, easily beating Zak McKracken and the Alien Mindbenders by 14 characters. Thirdly, you're probably thinking it's completely rubbish and embarrassingly naff. Well, naff it may be, but rubbish it isn't.

It's basically the story of Jesus' life narrated in 15 parts by Charlton Heston, with detailed links to geographical, cultural and historical contexts. These links include 10 pieces of music, around 100 works of art on a variety of religious themes, and a selection of full-motion video guides to places in the Holy Land.

Charlton Heston's role in all this is by no means a bit part. He wrote all of the stories himself (based on the King James Bible), he takes you on a personal guided tour of dozens of locations throughout Palestine, provides commentary on the music, and even narrates the help text. A few of the things he says are excruciatingly cringeworthy, but most of the time his narration is professional and interesting.



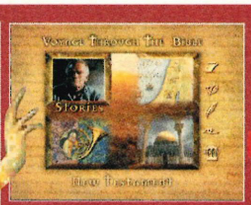
Cross purposes

The whole package is economically structured and almost entirely well presented. You can instantly access all of the functions from the main menu: the stories, art gallery, music, tour of Jerusalem, voyages through the Holy Land, on-line help, and the complete text of the Gospels. Interaction is kept simple, too. For example, with just a few mouse

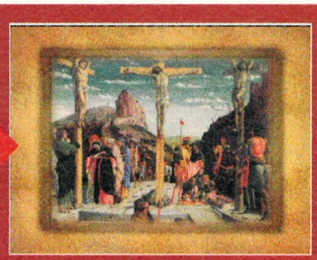
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was Charlton. Gordon Houghton listens to the greatest story ever told.



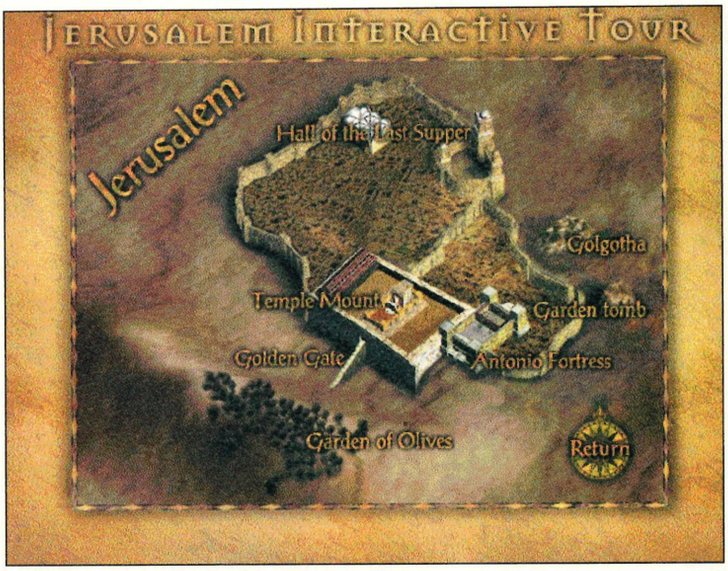
START HERE



The main menu screen gives you four choices: the story of the gospels, their geographical and historical context, some inspiring music, and a tour of Jerusalem.



The story of the gospels is the main attraction. It's split into 15 parts, from the birth of Jesus to the resurrection, and it's all narrated by good old Charlton Heston himself.



◄ If you can stand the sight of old men pointing at piles of bricks, you'll love Charlton Heston's personal guide to Jerusalem.

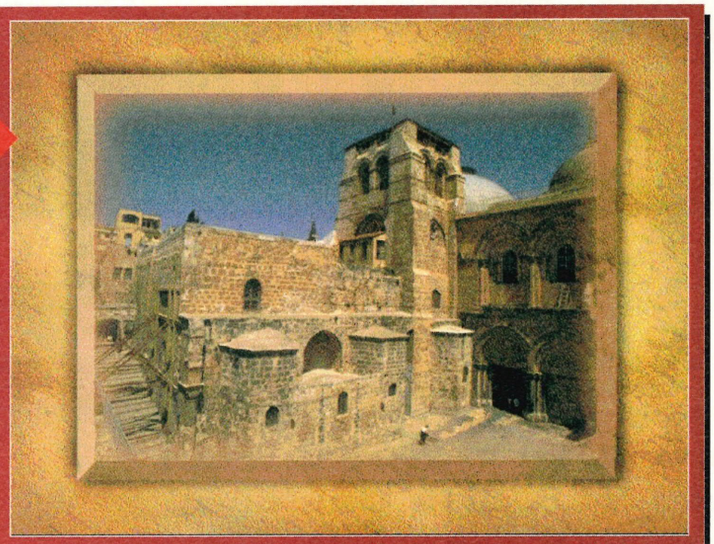
clicks you can listen to the story of the Last Supper, study maps of its location, look at Dali's painting on the subject and enter a 3D computer model of where the meal was held.

This system isn't quite as neat as it first sounds. The presentation is a bit ropey in a couple of places, particularly the slightly crude display in the Gospel text section. Also, if you've got a slower machine, you'll endure some fairly lengthy waits while the program switches from, say, a video of Charlton Heston to a painting and then to a 3D model.

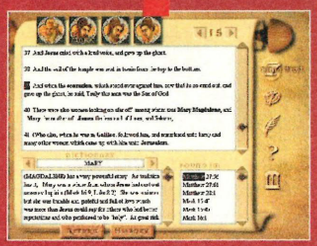
The mouse control isn't as smooth as it could be, either. I found that response times weren't always immediate and were sometimes confusing, partly due to CD access times for lengthy text passages, and partly because of a sizeable command buffer. None of these problems is serious, but they're irritating enough for you to make blasphemous remarks to your PC.



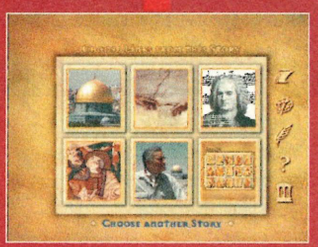
Returning to the link screen, you can take a look at a wide selection of art associated with Christ's death. Paintings can also be viewed separately in the Art Gallery.
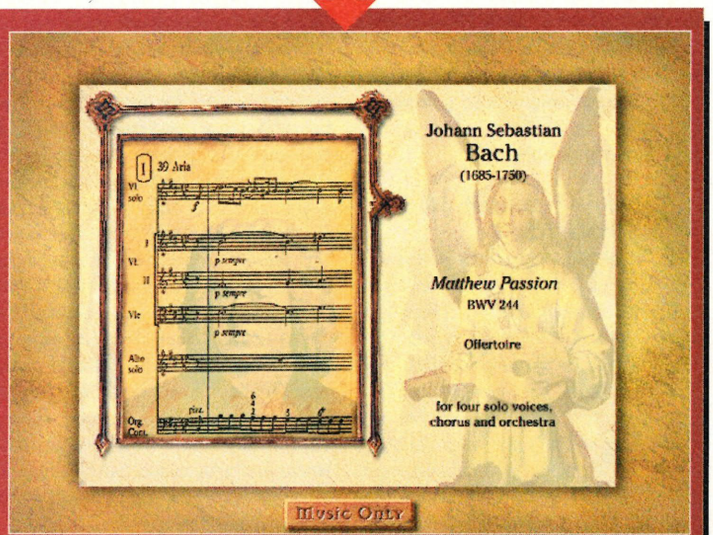


If you want to know more about specific locations, click on the Places icon. This is the Church of The Holy Sepulchre at Golgotha, where Christ was crucified.



For example, you've just heard the story of the crucifixion and you now want to read the source material. Clicking on the bottom left icon takes you to Mark 15, v. 39.



This link screen appears after the story is finished. It lets you examine appropriate paintings, music or locations connected with the tale, and gives you the associated Bible text.



Finally, you can listen to any one of ten lengthy pieces of music from medieval times to the present day — all of them inspired by the gospels. No happy clappy, obscenely cheerful modern hymns, though. And thank goodness for that.



Charlton athletic

If you can ignore the minor quirks and irks, you'll be rewarded with by far the best feature of Chas's Voyage Through the Bible — its flexibility. It starts with the basic premise of storytelling and then leaps lightly from one subject to the next, bringing in all kinds of interesting information.

The snippets you pick up along the way aren't any useless old tripe, either. The music, for example, ranges from Gregorian and Byzantine Chants, progresses through the Renaissance, Bach, Handel and Mozart, and ends with Faure's Requiem and Rosenman's Fugue. The list of artists ranges from Botticelli to Velazquez, and includes nearly a dozen paintings from Michelangelo. All of the works of art can be examined full-screen, and you can select them by painting, artist or story.

I've only got a couple of qualifications. Despite the packaging's claims of 'an unmatched level of scholarship', I wouldn't recommend this as the first choice for anyone doing a serious examination of the gospels. For that kind of intense study, you're better off trying a Bible-specific software house, such as Lion Publishing. The other problem you might have is with the program's content. Its attitude to Biblical truth is almost entirely unquestioning (there is some lightweight mention of subjects such as the Dead Sea Scrolls as a counterbalance), and if you're in any way a religious sceptic you might find even this low-key faith annoying.

Just one more thing. If you do like Chas's Voyage through the New Testament, GT Interactive is also producing an Old Testament version. If it's as polished as this, I'd recommend it.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Bible guide

Publisher: GT Interactive

Price: £39.99

Contact: (0171) 258 3791

PROS:
A well-structured guide that brings the gospels to life with stories, art and music.

CONS:
Even die-hard fans of Hollywood will eventually grow tired of Chuck's voice.

7



Napoleon

Pat Fox takes a look at France's most violent son (apart from Eric Cantona).

Of all France's national heroes — among them De Gaulle, Robespierre, Antoine de Caunes and Jean-Paul Gaultier — the most revered must be Napoleon, "this obscure Corsican general", who single-handedly (apart from the thousands of troops who fought and died for his cause) changed the face of Europe in the 19th century. So admired is he, in fact, that he merits his very own multimedia biography, featuring more than two hours of narrated and illustrated commentary on his life, his career and his extensive campaign to dominate the Western world.

Coverage begins with the French Revolution of the 1790s, and explains quite neatly the circumstances of Bonaparte's rise to power against this background. It explores in some detail his early years and the beginning of his relationship with Josephine (of "Not tonight, Josephine" fame). The narrated presentations are well put-together but some are a bit silly — the king losing his head to an animated guillotine is rather reminiscent of a Monty Python sketch.



Napoleon — what a handsome chap

War — what is it good for?

Most interesting is the analysis of the various battles he undertook to conquer Europe. There is a wealth of information about the run-up to each conflict, and the various groups and personalities involved, then the battle is played out in detail using an animated map. The various units are represented by icons, and the commentary explains what is happening as they move back and forth. It's a good way to view the progress of the battle, but can go on a bit long, so it's handy to be able to skip back and forth along the timeline at will. If you want to bypass the rolling presentation, you can read through the extensive transcript yourself — great for research purposes, but probably a little tiresome otherwise. You can also browse through all the illustrations that are featured in the program, including dozens of very well-reproduced paintings from the period.

If there's a problem, then it's that there is simply too much here for the casual reader to digest; however this would make a good reference work for educational purposes. Also, it often becomes apparent that the text has been translated from French, and not always very well — the English as a whole is slightly stilted, but fortunately it is rarely so much as to obscure the meaning of the text.

As a multimedia reference product Napoleon is probably just about as detailed as you could wish for, but I think it might be a bit too detailed to appeal to the home user.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 33Mhz, 486DX

Minimum memory: 8Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Win compatible card

A series of maps explain the various campaigns and conflicts in which Bonaparte flexed his imperial muscles.

Napoleon at the movies...

Why is it that Napoleon seems to crop up so often in silly films?

Time Bandits

Being somewhat vertically challenged himself, Napoleon felt right at home with the band of thieving dwarfs in Terry Gilliam's fantasy adventure.



Bill and Ted's Excellent Adventure

Another time-travelling farce, where this time Napoleon is abducted by the loveable dimwits and let loose in San Dimas, California, where he... er, goes bowling.



Red Dwarf: Better than Life

Not strictly a movie, but here the useless Rimmer gets to meet his hero on a beach. A robotic Napoleon also put in an appearance in a later episode.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Historical biography

Publisher: Infogrames

Price: £44.99

Contact: (0171) 7388199

PROS

Very detailed, lots of illustrations. Good for educational material.

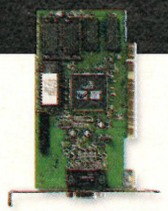
CONS

Perhaps too detailed? Translation is a bit creaky in places.

8



THE SUPERHIGHWAY CODE



You've seen them. Wandering around looking a little shaky. Obviously not using an ATI graphics accelerator. Our software drivers are the same across the entire product range to ensure stability and compatibility for dynamic, flicker free graphics. Get into the fast lane and call Taxan on (01344) 484646

TAXAN

ON BOARD WITH

ATI Graphics Pro Turbo and ATI Graphics Xpression

ATI TECHNOLOGIES INC.

Microsoft Oceans

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486, Wind 3.1/95

Minimum memory: 4Mb

Minimum graphics: SVGA

Sound: Wind comp soundcards



Children can make use of the guided tours, which, depending on the guide chosen, will give you a different view on the ocean. ▶

Cal Jones goes all deep on us, bursts into a jolly sea shanty, then runs off to join the navy. After examining Microsoft Oceans of course.

When I was a nipper I had a real thing about sharks. I fell hopelessly in love with them when, at the tender age of six, my Dad took me to see Jaws. So strong was my passion for the toothy predators that I even did a school project on them, which I lovingly illustrated with pictures of unlucky swimmers being torn limb from limb. My teachers grew worried for my mental health, and the fact that I was banned from swimming lessons after developing a penchant for diving under water to bite my fellow pupils' legs did not help in the slightest.



Fortunately, I didn't grow up into an axe murderer, but I still have a fondness for the large, toothy fish. Especially with peppercorn sauce and a side serving of lightly salted french fries. Microsoft's Oceans features plenty of sharks, along with just about every other aquatic life form going. You'll be able to find out all about fish, whales, sea birds, mammals, crustaceans, sponges and molluscs, plus all those disturbingly weird things that live down in trenches.

And it isn't just restricted to sea life. There's a huge section on the sea itself, which covers weather, tides, the water cycle, how the sea affects the landscape, how islands are formed and also details about the marine ecosystem. It isn't exactly degree level stuff, but it's fine as far as it goes.

On top of that, there's another section about people and the sea. You'll be able to read those whose lives and jobs revolve around the ocean — explorers, pirates and the like — as well as man's effect on the marine environment. There are some strong ecological messages here, but then that's hardly surprising because the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) has been involved with the CD.

A life on the ocean wave

So Oceans is pretty comprehensive. And whilst it doesn't go into a tremendous amount of detail on individual topics, it does cover a wide range of subjects and the information that is there is very well presented — but then we've come to expect that from a Microsoft multimedia product. And Ocean's is well up to Microsoft's usual standards — in fact, it's one of the prettiest products I've seen. There are colour drawings and photographs, QuickTime movies, diagrams and, of course, text. Some of the words in the text will be highlighted, so you'll be able to click on them to bring up a more detailed explanation of the term.

Finding your way around the CD is a piece of cake. The three main topics can be explored at leisure, but if you want to find out about something specific, say for example, box jellyfish, you can look it up in the index and you'll be taken straight to the relevant pages. Each page lists a number of related subjects (if you're looking at the scary sharks page, for example, you can then go to tiger sharks, hammerheads, shark' teeth, warning signs and so on), so there are innumerable ways of exploring the CD.

There is also a selection of guided tours, each of which explores a different person's relation to the sea. This is particularly useful for children who may not have the patience to navigate around the CD on their own. There are six different characters, including a solo sailor, 18th century seaman, scuba diver and even an alien. You'll learn different things from each tour, for example, the alien is distressed about whaling and other forms of marine exploitation.

Oceans is an extremely attractive product, and will appeal to anyone who enjoyed watching Jacques Cousteau when they were younger. Some may find it a bit light on facts, but it's a good place to start if you're interested in the sea yet don't know a great deal about it. Children particularly will find it useful, and there are enough things to click on to keep the most restless nipper occupied for a couple of hours at least. Pretty good, then, but well, it would be wouldn't it — it is Microsoft after all (sigh).

START HERE



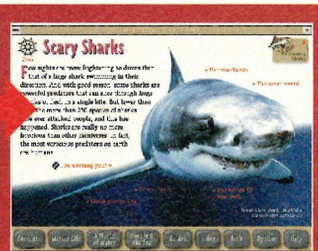
Where better to start than the contents screen? From here you can choose to look at marine life, people and the sea, a world of water, take a guided tour or use the index to find specific topics. There are many different ways of touring through the program.



Well, since I've always had a soft spot for sharks, I'm going to try and find some in the marine life section. I could choose sea birds and reptiles, mammals, crabby things or various wiggly creatures, but instead I'll plump for fish. Pass the vinegar.



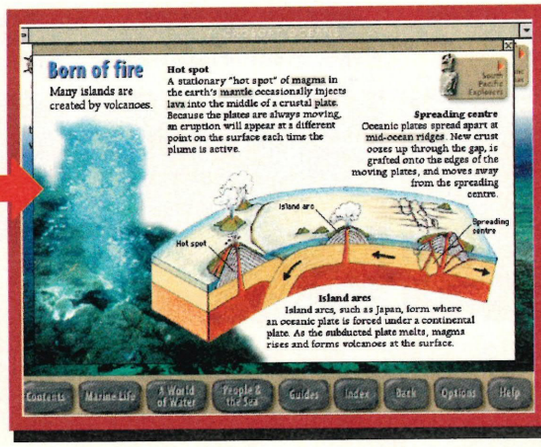
There are plenty of fish to look at, from sea horses to scorpionfish. But there are also two different shark categories — fascinating sharks and scary sharks. Let's opt for the latter and see if we can find a Great White — the villain of Jaws. Brrrr.



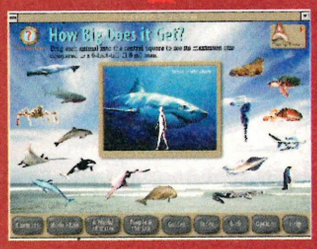
From this screen you can learn about sharks, clicking on highlighted words to clarify points. From here you can move to other screens on everything shark related, or choose the icon in the top right to move to another relevant topic — fascinating.



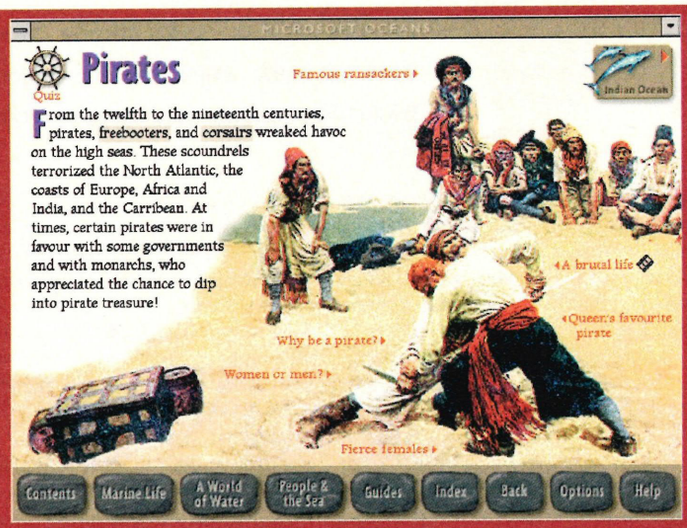
That's enough fish. Instead, I'm going to take a look at the ocean environment. Topics in this section include weather, islands, coral and the balance of life. One thing that Oceans has in its favour is that it's very, very pretty — and interesting.



Well, if you ever wanted to know how volcanic activity produced islands, Microsoft has provided you with a handy diagram. It doesn't quite reach A-level standard geography lessons, but you'll get a rough idea. Oceans makes information very accessible.



Every fish, mammal, bird and crustacean on this screen exists in the real world. You can drag each one into the central box to compare its size with a six foot man. We couldn't believe the size of the Chinese Spider Crab.



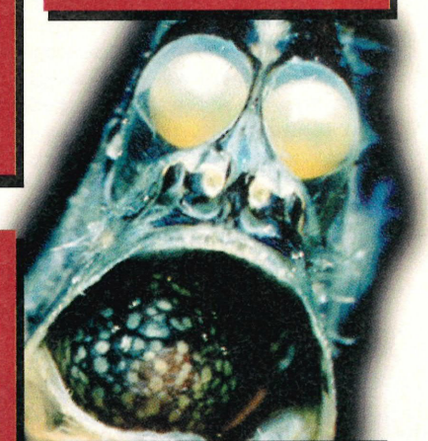
Pirates made honest seamen quake in their boots between the 12th and 19th centuries, though they seem to have gone out of fashion recently. Pirates were usually men, but there were also several successful women who often proved as fierce as their male counterparts.

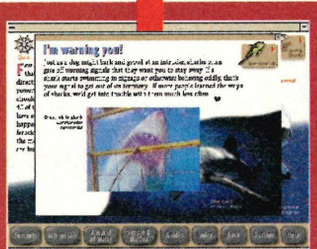


So how about people and the sea? I've decided to find out about explorers, who come from all sorts of locations around the world, as well as from different times. One thing that should interest most people is the section on pirates (which doesn't include Captain Pugwash, alas).

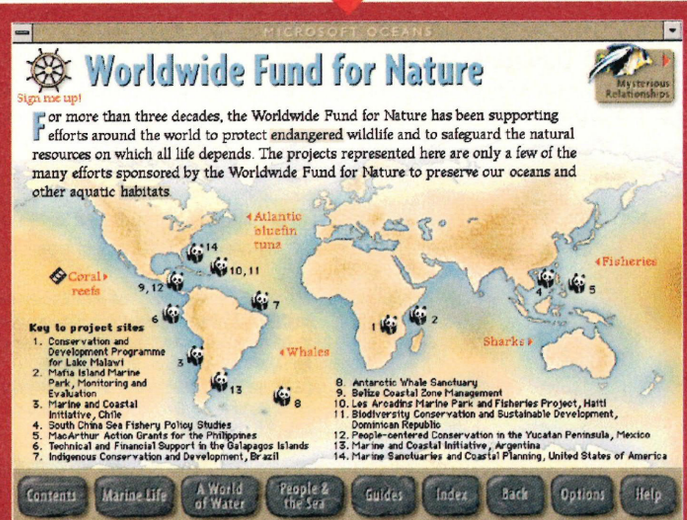


Some may see sharks as monsters, but there are plenty of other dangerous fish out there. The section on sea monsters covers both real and mythical creatures from serpents to giant squid.





One of the topics on the previous screen was warning signals — or how to recognise if a shark is going to attack. If it starts swimming in a zigzag pattern, get the hell out of the water, or if you're foolhardy, lock yourself in a cage and film the whole thing instead.



Oceans contains absolutely loads of fascinating facts, so it's well worth having if you're interested in all things wet and windy. In addition, some of the money Microsoft makes on each package is being donated to the Worldwide Fund for Nature, so you can feel all warm and virtuous after using it. This map shows all the WWF project sites around the world, and you can also join the organisation from this page, if you so desire.

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Ocean reference

Publisher: Microsoft

Price: £29.99

Contact: (01734) 270001

PROS

Covers a huge range of subjects, looks great and is easy to use.

CONS

Won't provide a great amount of detail on individual topics.

8

▼ *Hmmm, so this is how the world looks through the eyes of a producer eh?*



▼ *Apparently Kurt Cobain wanted white lilies and red drapes at one of his concerts.*



▼ *Wow, it's that Beatle bloke, go on Paul, do the froggie!*





◄ *Blimey, tune into Annie Lennox and click on the little TV icon in the corner and lo and behold, you're presented with a still — exactly the same one as you had on the original screen in fact. We've just got one word to say about that — Whhhhyyyyyyy?!*

MTV unplugged

If music be the food of love, play on and on and on on MTV. Lucy Hickman prepares to pig out.

CD ONLY

Minimum PC: 486/66, Win 3.1x
Minimum memory: 8Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Sound Blaster

Cor, wow, 70 whole bands packed on one CD, each with a set of up to 10 songs that's, er, LOTS! Indeed, on first glance, MTV Unplugged looks like an extremely attractive prospect — dozens of me favourite bands and, I hoped, hundreds of me favourite songs all lumped together with video footage, stills, interviews AND a chance to check out some exclusive, never-before-seen, full screen, full motion video footage of three top bands — hurrah! And then I started it up, hmmm!

The first thing that hits you when you hit the main selection screen is that presentation-wise the whole thing is really arty — masses of surreal pictures all amass together in a cosmic collage. Very nice, I'm sure (probably), trouble is, all the icons kinda blend in maaaa-n and it's damn difficult to understand what you're supposed to be doing. Minor problem, I guess, but it didn't bode well.

I decided to go straight into the exclusive, never-before-seen, blah, blah, blah footage which actually turned out to be the best part of the package — provided you're into Paul McCartney, 10,000 Maniacs (who?), or Lenny Kravitz that is (no, me neither). Click on the band you fancy and you're presented with your very own private concert which, for full screen video footage is surprisingly good quality. Sound is good too, the only drawback (which I guess is quite a big one really) is that the lip synch is way out — another deliberate arty, surreal touch? I don't think so.

Sound judgement

The second section is all about directing, producing, set design and so on. Having only vaguely skimmed through the manual beforehand, I thought the product allowed you to have a crack at these pursuits — foolish mortal! In each of the different sections you get another garish collage with some chap from the biz droning on about how it's all done — not terribly interesting or informative, quite frankly. Quick example: Tom Philips, set designer gives you the inside story on his trade which goes something along the lines of: 'So the producer calls me up and tells me to do so and so and so and I do it and he keeps the bits he likes and adds bits of his own.' Wow, revelation city!

The Showtime feature in this section has more full screen footage of Nirvana, the Cranberries, Live, Sheryl Crow and Melissa Etheridge which is all pretty cool while the Unplugged section has musical extracts and interviews with the same. The only problem with this lot is that images pop up and begin speaking and then disappear again for no apparent reason.

The main part of the package is the jukebox where your faced with a huge list of bands — REM, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Annie Lennox, Rod Stewart, Aerosmith, Eric Clapton, Squeeze, Sting, Midnight Oil, Duran Duran and stacks more and you simply scroll down the list to the band of your choice — well, it would be simple if the selection icon wasn't so damn fiddly. Once chosen you're faced with info about the artist, a list of the set, the option to listen to Alex Coletti, a producer, droning on a bit and in some cases a still or video footage of the band at work . Most don't have the video footage and some don't even have a background still (Mariah Carey, for one), which isn't a huge problem because the sound, overall is good (that'd depend on how good your sound card is though, I guess) and mostly you get a decent selection of songs from each artist. What infuriated me immensely though is that you can't scroll down the set and choose the song you want, you have to listen to the whole thing — grrrrrr! Quite frankly then, if music be the food of love, then I think I'm going on a diet because a great concept has been badly let down by arty for arty's sake leading to poor presentation and dodgy controls.



Mariah Carey was unavailable for the MTV Unplugged photo-shoot due to a severe illness — poorly toenail or something, I think (allegedly). But hey, at least you can listen to the dulcet tones of Alex Coletti, producer huh? ▼

▲ ***This is the director's screen — loads more surreal images, a dull black and white director bloke and hey, isn't that Adrian Edmundson in the middle there?***

PCR VERDICT

Genre: Video jukebox/reference
Publisher: Viacom New Media
Price: TBA
Contact: (0181) 846 9433

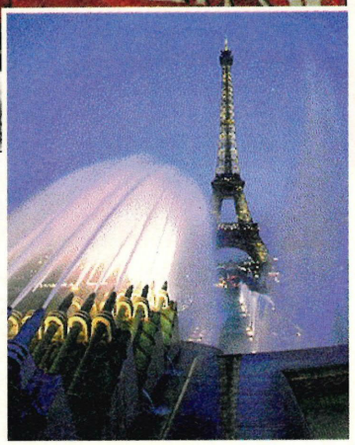
CONS
A big disappointment — good sound quality but a pretty ropey collection of songs, irritating controls and not enough interaction allowed.

5



Paris

History and Splendour



CD ONLY

Min. PC: 486SX, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 4Mb
Minimum graphics: SVGA
Sound: Wind comp sound card

Paris: romance, culture and a great big tower slap bang in the middle. Gordon Houghton takes a tour of the French capital.

I've only ever been to Paris twice. The first time I had nowhere to sleep, no water and no money; the second time someone followed me around the Louvre breathing garlic down my neck. So why did I bother? Because Paris has great art, a great history, great architecture, and that great big pointed tower-thing whose name I can't remember.

Paris: History and Splendour (PHS) is a grand and pompous name for a plain and simple program. Like a cheap weekend city break, it's got a bit of everything without giving you enough of anything. You'll find bits and pieces here on the city's physical evolution, some descriptive snippets from Victor Hugo, a panoramic video tour of the capital's most famous sights, and a mound of historical and cultural information.

Ooh la la, et cetera

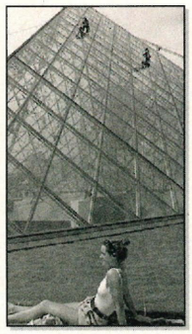
There are two main problems. For starters, I can't really see the point in releasing something like this. A good guide book costs about half as much, provides more information and is packed with loads of useful tips for tourists. Some uninspiring full motion video sequences and a few dozen art photographs don't really justify the extra cash PHS asks you to pay. If you really want to see what Paris looks like, it's not such an expensive destination.

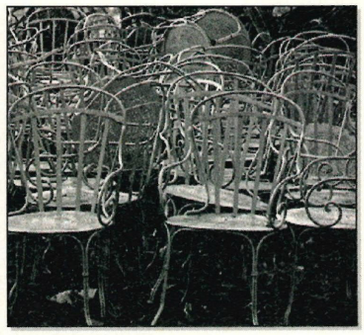
The second problem is with the presentation. Apart from a top-heavy menu system and a disjointed selection of subjects, PHS is over-reliant on spoken narration. The historical sections, for example, would have benefited from a text-only alternative to the unhurried narrator provided.

▲ What's 320 metres high, weighs 10,000 tons and contains 2.5 million rivets? If you know the answer, keep it to yourself.

That said, Paris: History and Splendour is by no means hopeless. If you can find a use for it in your house — and you really can't be bothered to grab a guide book and hop across the Channel — take a look.



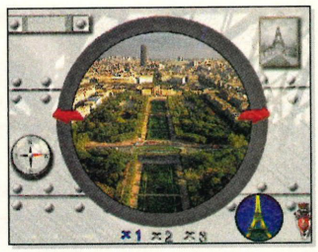


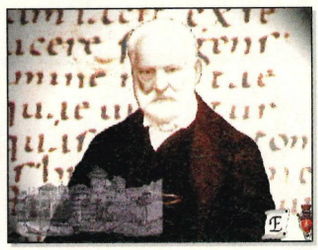


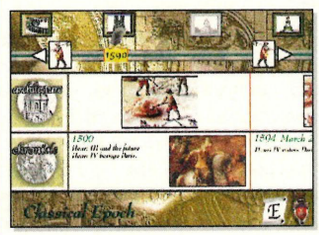
▲ A thematically-arranged gallery of photos by Jean Didier Risler attempts to capture the romance of Paris.

Un, deux, trois









▲ Paris: History and Splendour gives you three main ways to explore the French capital. There's an interactive tour of Paris' long history, a trip down the Seine complete with video sequences and panoramic stop-offs, and a three-part exploration of the city's growth. You also get to fiddle around with the obligatory timeline.

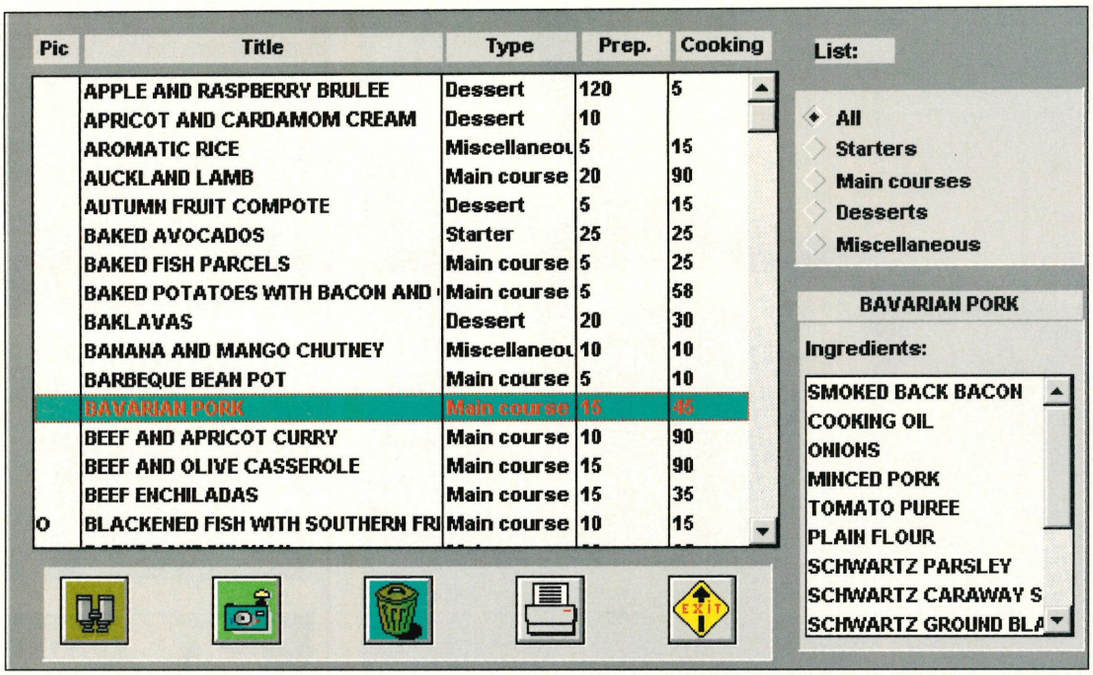
PCR VERDICT

Genre: Paris guide
Publisher: EMME Interactive
Price: £39.99
Contact: (01923) 211007

PROS
Photos, video sequences, guided tours and historical information offer a varied approach.

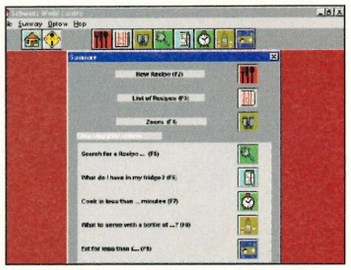
CONS
Not enough hard facts and the menu is a bit confusing.

5





▲ *You can add pictures to your own recipes (crap ones at that).*



▲ *The main menu allows you to search, or add your own recipes. Er... that's it!*

Schwartz World Cuisine Recipe Book

I've always liked to dabble in the kitchen, although it's more in the licking the chocolate cake mix off the spoon category than the actual cooking itself. Mind you, I have been known to cook a fillet steak with pepper sauce *and* new potatoes in my time and admit to owning a shelf or two of interesting cook books. But one thing I've never really considered translating to date, is all my favourite recipes onto PC, mainly because the PC is not normally known for lurking in the kitchen. Still, this hasn't deterred GSP from releasing an interactive recipe book regardless, and using one or two ideas that couldn't really be implemented on anything but a computerised product. Get ready to move your computer into previously unbreached territory.

Rik Henderson always wanted to be the presenter of the Cook Report — unfortunately this is the closest he'll get.

Let's get one thing straight from the start, this is a no frills piece of software. To be honest it looks absolutely primitive in comparison to most other useful reference applications, but the proof, as they say, is in the pudding, and not in the variety of swirling colours contained within the icing... or something. It's a database, that's it, simple really, and is primarily designed for you to input your own recipes as you accumulate them. The structure for doing so is easy enough, even for a complete cordon bleu novice like myself, and you can soon fill your PC with a very comprehensive list of your own design. Of course, thanks to the Schwartz license, the recipe book already provides you with a veritable cornucopia of tasty snacks, main courses and deserts, all of which can be found lurking unobtrusively within the confines of the database.

CD AND DISK
Minimum PC: 386, Windows 3.1
Minimum memory: 2Mb
Minimum graphics: VGA
Sound: N/A

One last spoonful...

Of course, any decent recipe book will give you all that information with less fuss, but what is different about the Schwartz World Cuisine Recipe Book is that it will also let you search for a variety of different dishes in a variety of different ways.

For instance, the search engine, can take a list of all the ingredients you have in your store cupboard (just highlight each item in a special menu) and then present you with a selection of delicious recipes for you to try using the given ingredients. Or, it can take the details of your favourite wine and recommend a number of complimentary menus to go with your favourite tipple. It will even let you search for recipes that only cost a certain amount of money, or cater for a set amount of people. All useful in their own ways, but it would have been nice to have seen a more powerful search engine that allowed you to do all of the above at the same time. Unfortunately you can't here, and it is this which makes it all a tad limiting.

And this is the general failing with the software, there just isn't enough depth. It's a shame that it looks like a dog, but I can live with that, and the recipes themselves are very well planned out, with a step by step guide on the process of cooking the required dish, but there's just not enough to do (unlike Microsoft's Julia Child program). Also, if you want to use the recipes in the kitchen it does allow you to print them out, but then don't they call that a book?



PCR VERDICT

Genre: Cookery
Publisher: GSP
Price: £19.95
Contact: (01480) 496575

PROS
A large database of recipes, with easy to follow steps.

CONS
Very basic looking, not enough there to make it better than a normal printed recipe book.

5

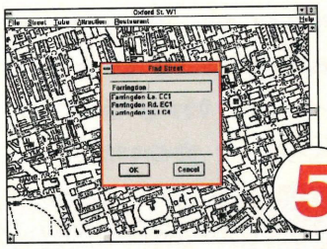
shorts

London Access

(Street finder)

This multimedia streetfinder may provide an easy way for users to locate central London streets, tube stations, restaurants and attractions, but its comprehensiveness leaves something to be desired. You won't find out about Kew Gardens, for instance, because it's not on the map. And whilst we know for a fact there are many good restaurants in Farringdon, the closest London Access could locate was in W1. This is a fair product, but just doesn't contain enough information.

Instant Access ● £15.99 ● (0181) 205 2596 ● 386, VGA, Windows 3.1, 4Mb RAM



5

Where To Stay In Historic England

(Hotel guide)

If you fancy a holiday in good old Blighty, but don't know where to stay, this is for you. This database of hotels allows you to select your accommodation by location, style of building, what you want in your room, hotel and leisure facilities, price and so on. There are colour photos of each hotel, info on the local attractions and all facilities are listed. Basically, it allows you to choose your ideal hotel, and is good for those who travel frequently.

Red Eye Multimedia ● £19.96, (0181) 742 3173 ● 386SX, VGA, Windows 3.0, 2Mb RAM



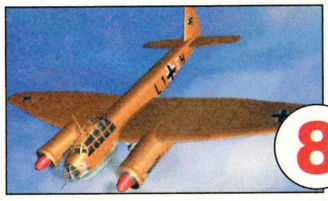
8

Wings: Midway to Hiroshima

(Reference)

Aviation nuts will welcome this latest addition to the Wings series. It covers military aircraft and aviation from 1942 to 1945, and is well presented and easy to use. It includes five airfields, all reconstructed in 3D so that you can look around, 15 3D models of historic aircraft, an hour of video, a database of 600 WWII aircraft, 1,000 photographs and a section featuring animated reconstructions of some of the missions. There are also simulations of several planes, so you can even get up there and fly. All told, this is a good package if you have a yearning to learn about WWII planes.

Maris ● £39.99 ● (0171) 488 1566 ● 486SX, VGA, Windows 3.1, 8Mb RAM



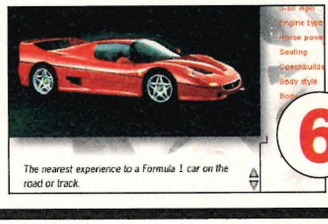
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Interactive Guide To Ferrari Road Cars

(Reference)

This interactive coffee table book should please anyone who aspires to owning a Ferrari. With lots of video and photographs of all the different models, it'll keep car enthusiasts happy. However, although the presentation is attractive, the interface is a tad fiddly since you move from one section to another using a gearstick which you must drag into the correct slot. The appeal is also limited — it doesn't take all that long to work your way through the CD and unless you are fanatical about the subject, it can get boring fairly quickly.

Global Beach ● £29.99 ● (01734) 342724 ● 486SX, SVGA, Windows 3.1, 8Mb RAM



6

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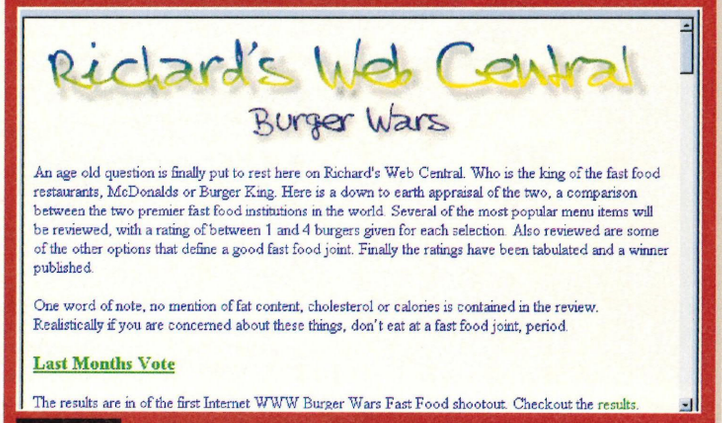
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Top: time taken
Bottom: amount spent

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£ 00.20

/http://www.itw.com/~rscott/burg-wars.html

Hungry for information? Yahoo is an excellent starting ground for food hunts, and where better to start than with some Fast Food. The burger war site contains unbiased comparative reviews of BigMacs and Whoppers, along with the chance to have your say as to which is best. Nearby there is also an excellent page set aside for Chinese food lovers: to quote, "What discussion of Chinese food would be complete without a discussion on MSG." Trouble is, five minutes after visiting this site you want to go back and do it again...



http://www.usyd.edu.au/~kyeoh/lee/broccoli.html
http://www.honors.indiana.edu/~veggie/recipes.cgi

I feel conned! All I wanted to know about was broccoli, and instead I get tricked into visiting the ultimate vegetarian Web page, complete with recipe of the day and a searchable index. I would much rather the broccoli page was expanded with more gems such as the fact that medical reports show that broccoli could be implemental in the curing of impotence. In my opinion, the world would be a better place if more people would eat their broccoli. For instance, a well documented fact is that Adolf Hitler was not renowned for his broccoli consumption.

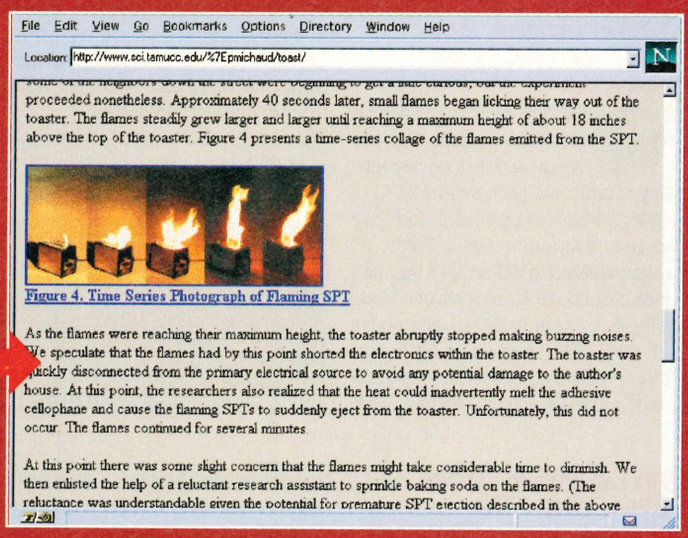
00:35
£ 01.40

http://www.reed.edu/~cramsay/shrine.html

OK, so the guy is obviously insane but he is still talking about toast. Sadly however, he has mixed up toast as in "a tastey hot snack made from two slices of bread", and toast as in "a new religion". As a result these pages make delightfully silly reading, as he and his acolytes extol the virtues of their new god. "Here we see the High Priest of 12-Grain infusing the shrine with his toastly goodness." he proclaims. Uh-huh. Not enough wholegrain in his diet, that's for sure. Disturbingly, the toast shrine is only a short jump from a far more dangerous page of scientific experiments.

00:12
£ 00.48



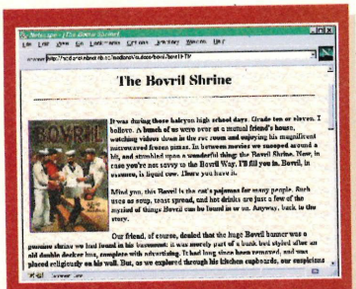


http://www.sci.tamucc.edu/%7Epmichaud/toast/

00:23
£ 00.92

SPT: the ultimate in low-cost, high-performance incendiary devices, or harmless snack? If you are wondering what an SPT is, wonder no more — it's a Strawberry Pop Tart. However, if you are also wondering what happens if you heat a pop tart for a shade over the recommended cooking time (and prevent the toaster from ejecting the tart) you should visit this page. The scandal is that children can buy SPT's in most shops in packs of six and use them without adult supervision. This kind of dangerous product must be banned immediately and I urge you most strongly to write to your MP immediately.

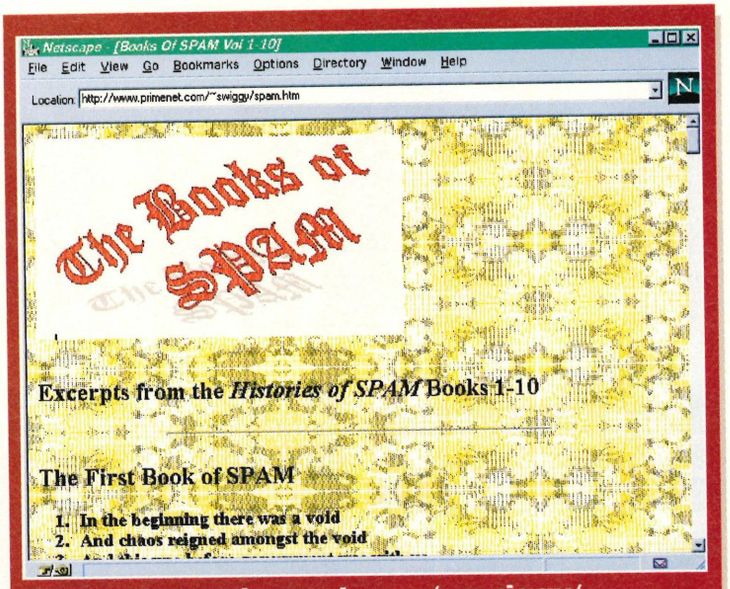




http://medianet.nbnet.nb.ca/medianet/curioso/bovril/bovril.HTM

Ever fancied a cup of liquid cow? Oh come on, you know you do. Perhaps you're scared to try it because you've swallowed all the hysteria about bovine spongeystuff. If so, fear not: be reassured as you browse this shrine to the Brown Goo, which includes amusing anecdotes, favourite recipes and vital pieces of bovine information. Note: Bovril is not endorsed by the Vegetarian Society. Bad taste joke: First cow – aren't you afraid of catching Mad Cow Disease? Second cow: not me, I'm a duck. Ho, ho.

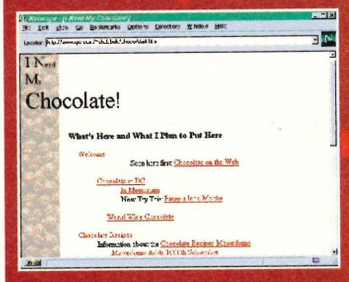
01:02
£ 02.48



http://www.primenet.com/~swiggy/

02:45
£ 05.60

What better way to round off a quick food crawl than with the official diet of the Internet: Spam. Spam holds a special place in the heart of all Net users — not because we love it, no — but rather because we hate the bloody stuff so much. Pink and glistening, strange chemicals, involuntary urges: this is what Spam can do to you. To know more about Spam you should visit The Church of Spam where you will find consolation in the many readings taken from the Holy Books of Spam and be able to sing Spam Hymns. You will also be able to enjoy the links to other Spam related sites and generally feel more relaxed and at one with yourself.



http://www.qrc.com/~sholubek/choco/start.htm

Chocolate: can't live without it, can't live without it. Or something like that. If you are still looking for something brown to eat, but preferably lacking in mammal you'll get a rush from this site: the lovingly put together I Need My Chocolate. Yes, an entire site dedicated to the high-sugar, tooth-rotting, dangerously addictive substance which we all eat far too much of. These award-winning pages are packed with chocolate coated links, and everything is wrapped in a crispy shell which melts in your mouth, not in your hand. There is also a link to the official M&M site.



01:27
£ 03.48



http://198.3.117.222/

02:03
£ 04.92

Now this is much more healthy. Not a bit of chocolate in sight. Instead, what we have here are simply lots and lots of little pieces of baked plant floating around in a bowl of semi-skimmed milk. Yes, it's the cereal site. The site all about American cereal, which delivers that same weird parallel universe feeling. Who is the funny cartoon kid advertising a maple flavoured oat mush? Why would I want to spend three hours downloading an MPEG animation of a TV ad? Where is Tony the Tiger when you need him?

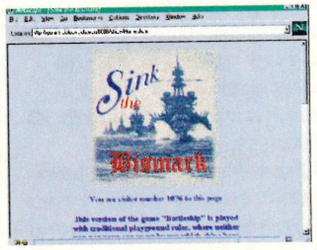


Cool sites

Battleships

http://polaris.biology.ucla.edu:8088/ships/Home.shtml

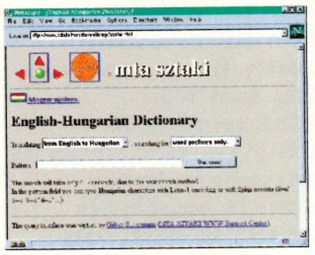
You sank my battleship! Ah, loving words indeed. Now you can play on the World Wide Web thanks to this interactive on-line game version. Log in and sink your opponent for a place on the High Score table.



Phrase Book

http://www.sztaki.hu/sztaki/elibrary/szotar.html

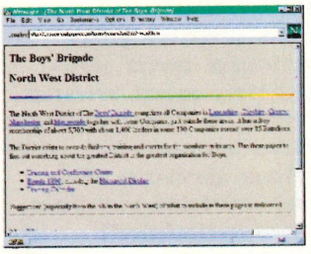
Rather disappointingly, this site is apparently not a Monty Python joke: it really is an on-line phrase book. Well, I suppose it could be useful. Couldn't it?



Boys Brigade

http://dspace.dial.pipex.com/town/square/ae252/nwdist.htm

Are young males in shorts sporting near fascist-like haircuts right up your street? Well tell them to get lost. In the meantime, here is the first of I suspect many Boys Brigade Web sites to appear. Why, I do not know.

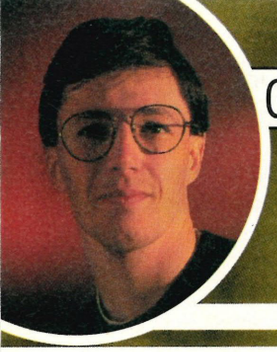


Oooh, spook!

http://www.zoom.com/personal/dolphin/psychic.html

Need help? Why not ask Todd's psycho friends? Visit this site, type in your e-mail address and your question and a caring and responsible answer will hurtle back.

NET



Painter 4.0

"You don't know it yet, but you're very lucky. This month we've not only got a first review of the amazing Paint 4 from Fractal Design but also not one, but two hardware round-ups! Painter 4 is one of the most impressive paint packages we've seen. Just take a look at the stunning images spread around these pages, all were created with it — fantastic isn't it! Naturally, if you've created a masterpiece you'll want to print it out, so what better to follow it than a round-up of five low cost inkjet printers. Of course, it's not all work, work, work. There's also a comprehensive look at the latest joysticks and joypads, and more than a few cheap and cheerful utilities grace the following pages, You couldn't get much more lucky."

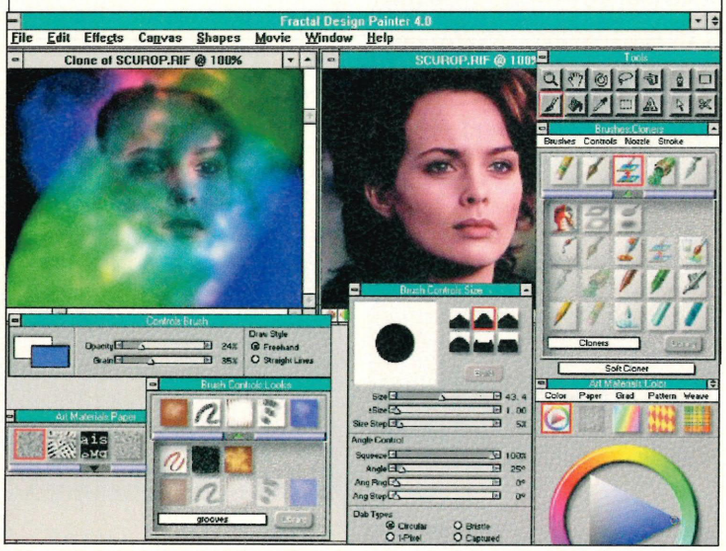
Andy Leaning

CD AND DISK

Manufacturer: Fractal Design Corp

Price: £399

Contact: 0181 200 8282



▲ *Palette mania, and those are just for adjusting the brush.*

It paints, it draws, it probably even makes hot chocolate. Kenji Takeda laps up the luxury of Fractal Designs new paint package.

To say that Fractal Design Painter 4 is all-singing and all-dancing would be a huge understatement. It not only performs but also shows you to your seat, gets you a Ben and Jerry's during the interval, drives you home and makes you a hot mug of cocoa before tucking you up in bed. This is far from being just a paint package, and its enormous range of graphic manipulation features will have all you budding digital artists drooling buckets.

The Natural-Media (TM) painting system is superb, allowing you to paint with watercolours, oils, pastels, charcoal, pencil, and airbrush onto a wide variety of materials giving phenomenally realistic results . Using the rather bizarre Image Hose (TM) you can also liberally sketch with clouds, trees, gravel, sheep, pigs and anything else you can dream up. However, perhaps the most unique (and useful) feature is the ability to have bitmapped images and vector objects co-exist in the same picture. Effects such as glass distortion, warping and lighting can be applied to both types of image simultaneously in a truly seamless manner. Other features include photo retouching tools, mosaic creation (with little tiles), Worldwide Web graphics utilities, frame-by-frame animation, the list goes on and on...

Brushes 'R Us

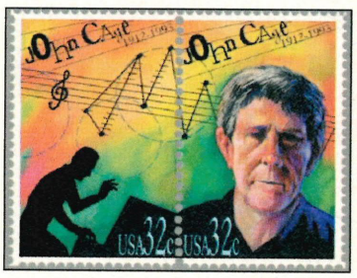
The real core of Painter 4 is the Natural Media (TM) paint system, which models not only the behaviour of various 'brushes', but also the way they interact with the variety of material surfaces, such as paper and canvas. This greatly enhances the amount of expression which is possible, removing that sterile feeling traditionally associated with computer generated graphics. The number of brush variants available is truly astounding, ranging from charcoal, chalk and pastel to camel hair, loaded oil and spattered water brushes. There are even 14 different types of eraser to choose from!

For those of us who are slightly less adept at wielding a paintbrush, the cloning tool is an absolute godsend. It allows you to create stunning pictures in a matter of minutes from your favourite photo or image. Ever wondered what Van Gogh would have made of Izabella Scorupco? Well now's your chance to find out. Simply wave your cursor over the blank canvas and watch in wonder as Painter magically conjures up Ms Scorupco in the style of your choice.

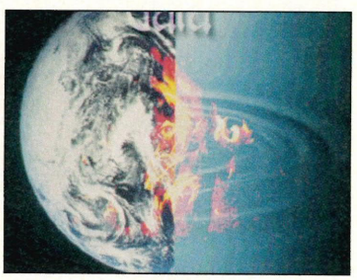
If you thought that was neat, then the Image Hose (TM) is likely to knock you right off your chair. This amazing tool is a kind of hyper-intelligent air brush that sprays image objects, such as trees or clouds, in either a random or structured way. For example, the small forest nozzle consists of 14 different trees and bushes which are sprayed onto the canvas, following the direction of your brush strokes. The images are scaleable so a realistic scene can be gradually built up one row at a time to give the picture plenty of depth.

That's not all folks

If Painter 4 only consisted of the Natural Media bits then it would still be a fine package. But that's not the half of it, as there are also the impressive Shapes



▲ *John Cage Stamp by Frank Hsu. Painter 4's power on show.*



▲ *Who said this was just a paint package? Welcome to Effects.*

High Lights

Printers ... 118
Joysticks ... 122
MPEG ... 128



▲ *The Twins by Hiroshi Yoshii*



▲ *Kool Kat by Wendy Meyer*

(TM) and image retouching tools to mention. These combine the drawing and editing facilities of packages like CorelDraw, with the bitmap manipulation features of Photoshop into a single, seamless program environment. You can load in vector images from CorelDraw and continue to edit them as smooth, fully anti-aliased objects, instead of being forced to rasterise them into bitmaps, as is usually the case.

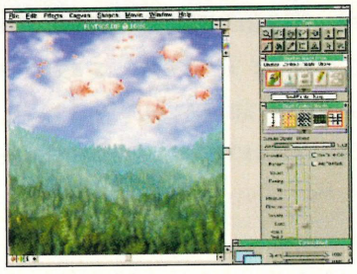
The effects which can be cast upon the image and its components are far too numerous to mention. One ingenious new gizmo is the Mosaic tool, which quite literally cuts out little tiles for you and sticks them together under your cursor with amazing results which would make any Roman proud. Overlaying and masking objects is achieved with consummate ease, and the texturing and patterning capabilities are second to none. Needless to say, the results which are possible are limited only by your imagination.

As with any package of this depth, there are a huge number of commands to master. The user-interface is quite intuitive, with separate 'drawers' being filled with groups of related tools. An easy-to-follow tutorial guide is included to guide you through the program's features, together with an extensive manual, a quick reference palette picker and a CD-ROM packed full of goodies. The only real niggle is that the screen can become crowded on smaller monitors.

Fractal Design has really pulled out all the stops with Painter 4, and the result is a supreme paint program which should also satisfy the needs of digital artists and designers for all but the most demanding of retouching and illustration tasks.



◄▲ ***I created this picture in seconds - and pigs can fly... Actually it took about ten minutes and ably shows off the power of Painter 4, the hose feature allows any shape you want to be sprayed and resized on the fly (he, he, he).***





Reign in Seattle by Pamela Voris ►

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Paint and illustration package

System requirements:
486DX, 8Mb RAM for Windows 3.1 or 12Mb RAM for Windows 95

Ease of use:
The interface is good but can become cluttered

Performance:
Unsurpassed

Value for money:
It may seem expensive, but graphics packages don't get much better than this at any price

9

CD ONLY

Price: £19.99

Developer: VCI

Contact: 01923 817968

Collectors Catalogue

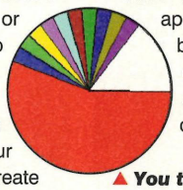
Catalogue your entire record collection with this program — no anorak required. John Kennedy finds a train-spotter's dream.

Some people like collecting things. I, for example, like collecting PC hardware, but my bank manager sees to it that my collection grows very slowly. Some people like collecting things so much that they'll write down all the details on little cardboard files and set aside rainy afternoons to laboriously sort through them all.

If this is your cup of tea you may be keen to start typing all your collections into your PC so that you can perform lightning fast searches, print out long lists and generally impress your neighbours. Obviously what you need is a database program, but not so obvious is the decision about which database program to get. Most of the heavy duty database packages have far too many options, unnecessary built-in programming languages and hefty price tags.

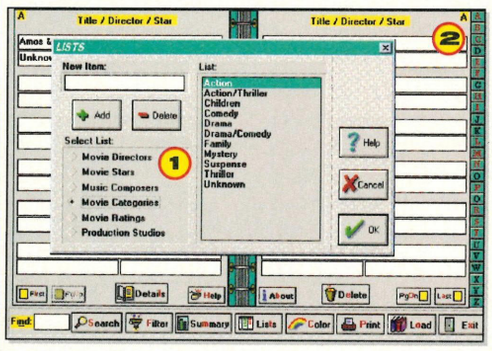
The Collector's Catalogue is a CD-ROM containing three separate programs, each concerned with a particular and yet popular sort of collection. If you collect music, movies or books you'll now be able to spend several month's cataloguing the details to store on disk. Once you have all the details you can search your database, print it out or create some pretty, coloured graphs. And that's about all there is to it: each of the three programs are exactly the same at heart, with the main differences being the names of various fields. Each database stores the records in alphabetical order with a list of A-Z tabs down the right-hand side of the screen for easy access. The pages can be flicked backwards and forwards like a standard Filofax.

Regarding flexibility, it might have been better to make a single database which was considerably more definable. In this way, individual users could choose the exact fields required. The music, film and book systems could have been provided as example database style templates. Keeping the applications as simple as possible is commendable, but a lack of printed documentation may scare new users as not everyone will find the help style easy.



▲ *You too can create graphs showing how big your film library is...*

How it works



◀ *Once you've got a database in Collectors Catalogue — this is one of films — you can ask it to list all the entries by a type (1). You can then look at each entry of this list in more detail (2) the list is indexed using a tabbed phone-book approach.*

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Database

System requirements:
386 or better, CD-ROM drive, 2Mb, Windows 3 or better.

Value for money:
Budget software, with a limited range of features, but useful for instant trivia-like searches.

5

AddressBook

CD ONLY

Price: £35.83

Developer: Parsons Technology

Contact: 01752 985 100

Andy Leaning can't even remember his own phone number, let alone his chums'. Maybe AddressBook to remedy the situation.

If like me you need to store lots of names and addresses then GuildSoft has just the thing for the both of us. The cunningly named AddressBook is, you guessed it, a computerised name and address book. Such utilities are ten-a-penny these days, so what does this one have to tempt you to part with your readies?

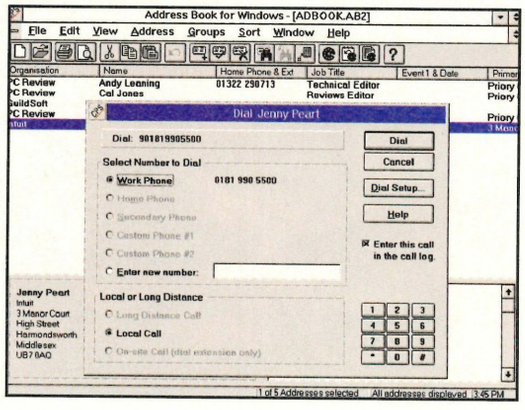
Well for one thing it's pretty flexible. Along with the basic data you'd expect a program of this sort to be able to handle (name, address, telephone number etc) there are also fields for a second address, two special event dates, plus room for two further telephone numbers. Entering data is also easy, thanks to a 'SmartData Entry' system. As a person's details are entered the text being typed in is compared to previously input information, if AddressBook thinks your new entry is the same as an earlier one it'll automatically fill in the remainder of the field for you. If you don't want to use this just carry-on typing.

Once you've got contact details entered you can sort them, search for a particular contact, auto-dial telephone numbers, and even keep a log of phone conversations. Or you can categorise each entry: friends, business contacts and so on and then search for records of a particular type.

All well and good so far, but there are a few niggling doubts. The built-in back-up option only caters for the floppy drive — with information as valuable as my address book I like to keep a duplicate copy on my second hard drive. It also seems rather slow at retrieving previously stored entries. When I double click on a record in Ascend's Address Book the form view appears instantly, AddressBook takes half a second.

If you're looking for a more efficient address book than your note pad then AddressBook is worth a look, but check out shareware utilities of a similar sort before parting with your money.

Annoyingly, AddressBook insists that you tell it which phone number to use when autodialling and forces you to do it every time! It even does so if you only have one number for the contact!?! Surely a default system would have been better.



PCR VERDICT

Category:
Database

System requirements:
486 Windows 3 or better PC.

Value for money:
A great little address book with some handy tools thrown in for good measure – but similar programs cost less.

7

Five Alive

EPSON STYLUS IIs

Looking for a colour printer? Then look no further, as the PC Review team check out five of the latest and greatest budget inkjet printers around.



Price: £238
Manufacturer: Epson
Contact: (01442) 61144
Overall: 7

When it comes to printing, Epson is definitely in the heavy-weight league of contenders. A few years back the company practically owned the home and small office printer market, the after-effects of which you can see by the compatibility with Epson compatibles that many printer manufacturers still advertise. However, Epson didn't spot the inkjet market until it was well established. Now however it is fighting back with its Stylus range which offers outstanding resolutions of up to 720dpi, full colour printing, at very respectable speeds. The Stylus IIs is the latest model in the range and is aimed firmly at the budget end of the market.

It retains the 720dpi output mode that has made other models in the series so popular, but with a colour page printing speed of 1ppm it's slower than the Stylus Color II or Stylus Pro. This is pretty sluggish but is largely made up for by outstanding colour image print quality — superb is an understatement. Colours are rich, vibrant and deep, not photographic quality but bloody good all the same. Sadly this is let down by poor text output — this is not a printer for word processing and DTP use! We also experienced problems when using the Epson software drivers on Windows 95 system — although it printed okay, trying to change any parameters crashed the software.

If you do a lot of work with graphics you should read our lead feature this month, but also have a look at the Stylus II range — this model comes strongly recommended!

LEXMARK JETPRINTER 1020

Price: £199
Manufacturer: Lexmark
Contact: (01628) 899088
Overall: 7

Lexmark was formally a division of the mighty IBM, before being involved in a management buy-out for a vast sum of money. Since then the company has thrown off the awful, square, IBM design of its older models and introduced designer styling, while also keeping much of the innovation and advanced technology that IBM is known for.

The Jet Printer 1020 is the company's newest baby and has benefited from the company's new found designer styling trend. The compact (it measures just 360x208x198mm) curvy look helps disguise it in a home environment — something other printer manufacturers would do well to copy.

On the specification front it has a maximum resolution of 600x300 dpi which gives pretty respectable output both of text and graphics. In fact, when using high grade paper the text output is very impressive, almost bordering on laser printer quality. Where the 1020 fails however is its output speed, while not terribly slow it's hardly speedy either, especially when using its highest resolution.

Like the 150 this model comes with Lexmark's innovative taking software, making setting up and using it very simple (see the 150 review for more details).

The other consideration is that the Jetprinter has only one ink cartridge — so you'll either need to put up with colour prints that feature tinted blacks or swap cartridges during the printing process. For a printer in the £250 price range this is common, so we can't mark it down for this, but it's worth knowing all the same. Overall the JetPrinter 1020 is a neat little printer, suitable for home use but not really up to serious use



▲ ***Perhaps not as elegant as its big brother, but still very stylish.***

ANDY LEANING'S TOP FIVE PRINTING TIPS

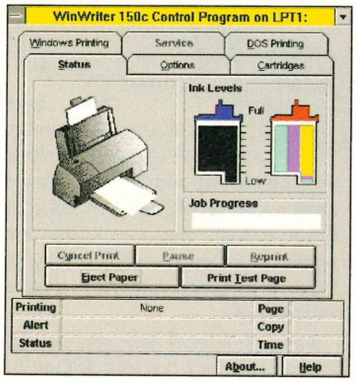
Our technical editor has spent more time than anyone we know using and working with colour printers, here are his top five tips for getting more out of your colour printer.

1. When possible print in draft mode — it saves time and ink.
2. Close un-needed applications before printing for faster printing times.
3. Use primary colours, its slower and uses more ink if the printer has to mix up the colours.
4. Get the last printer drivers from the manufacturer, they're often faster or give better output.
5. Use colour sparingly for more effect, for highlights etc. Keep the use of colour consistent through your documents and to link related information together.

LEXMARK 150c

Price: £340
Manufacturer: Lexmark
Contact: (01628) 899088
Overall: 8

On the first page of this roundup we looked at the Lexmark 1020, the company's latest model. Now it's the turn of its 150c. This model is also aimed at the home market, but has a higher specification to make it suitable for office and serious use as well.

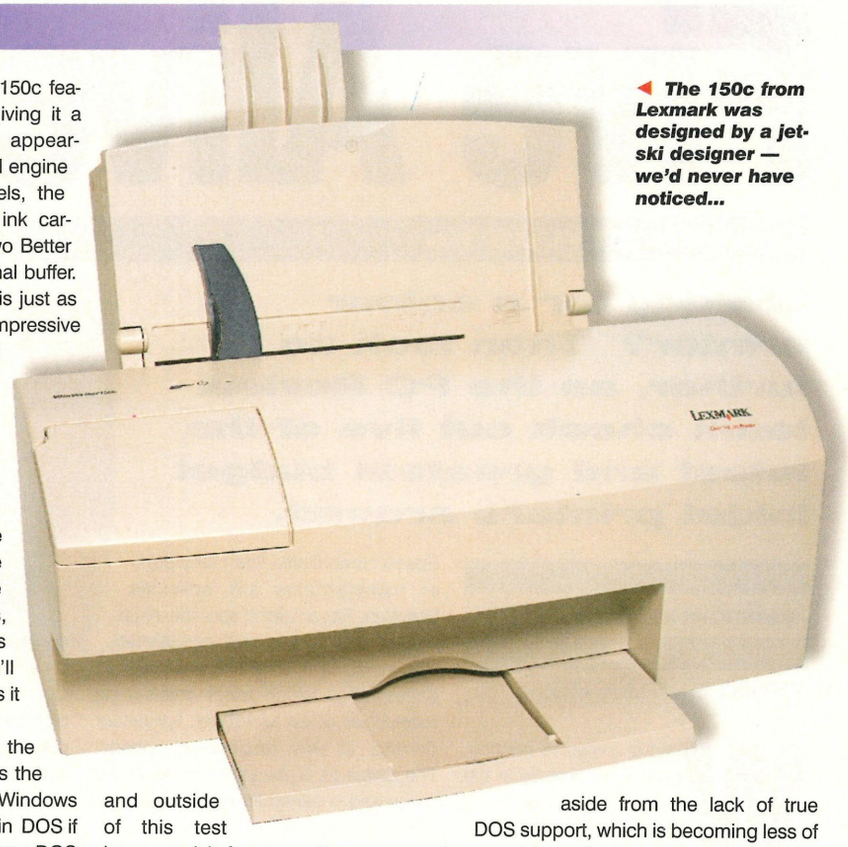


▲ ***The Lexmark printer driver — you can see the paper moving through the printer in real-time.***

Like the earlier model, the 150c features designer styling thus giving it a more sophisticated elegant appearance. Looks aside, the internal engine is very similar in both models, the major difference being dual ink cartridge slots (see the panel 'Two Better Than One') and a larger internal buffer. As a result the output quality is just as good — great graphics and impressive text output if you haven't read the 1020 review yet.

One area where both the 150c and 1020 score is in their printer driving software. With pictures and animations to show paper flowing through the printer and ink levels in the cartridges it's very easy to use and configure the printer. The software even speaks, announcing printer errors as they happen, although you'll probably want to turn this off as it gets annoying after a while.

The biggest problem with the 150c, and one that also affects the 1020 and Oki 2010 is that it's a Windows only printer, it can only print in DOS if the program can open in Windows DOS screen. It won't work on other computers either because of this, but this is hardly a problem. I really like the 150c and outside of this test have used it for some time now, and have yet to find a major problem with it — aside from the lack of true DOS support, which is becoming less of a problem. The only thing you need to watch out for is that you use a proper two-way parallel cable (some of the cheaper ones won't work correctly).



◀ ***The 150c from Lexmark was designed by a jet-ski designer — we'd never have noticed...***

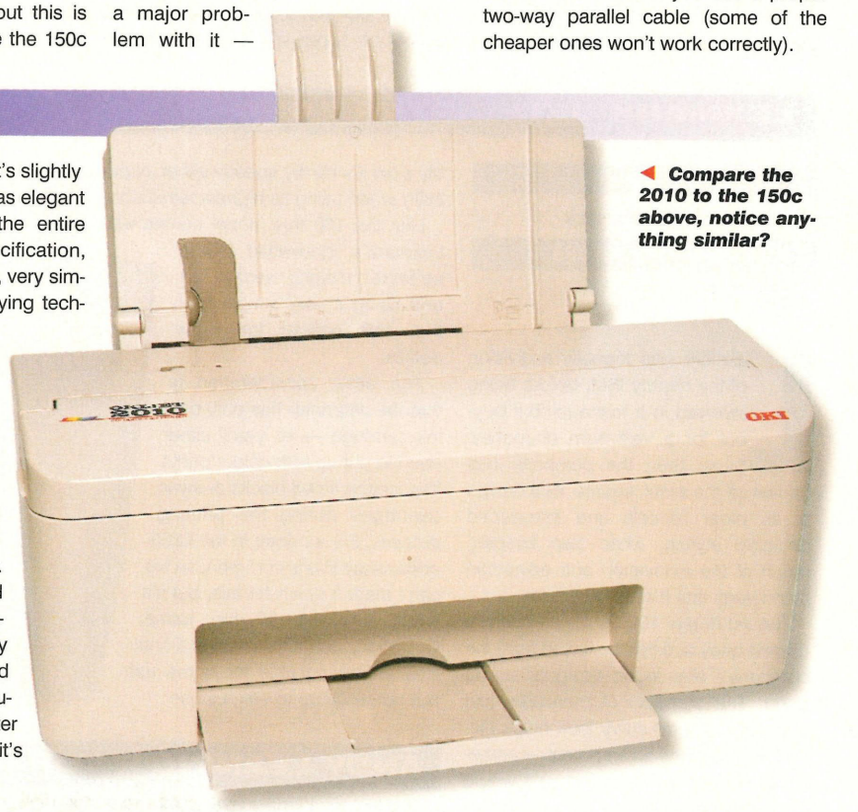
OKI OKIJET 2010

Price: £340
Manufacturer: Oki
Contact: (01635) 524526
Overall: 7

The OkiJet 2010 arrived just in time for this review, it being a brand new model. For its price it offers a very reasonable specification of 600x300 dpi, printing speed of 3 pages per minute (ppm) in black and white, 1.5 for colour, and dual ink cartridge holders for both black and colour units.

Print quality is very impressive, up there with the Lexmark 150 (for a good reason which we'll come to in a minute). Text output in particular is respectable, with the 600x300dpi producing well defined clear characters. Banding and waving (caused by wet ink causing the paper to warp) was at a minimum, even on lightweight paper. I did however experience the odd paper jam, this was corrected simply by turning the printer on and off again letting it re-feed the paper.

As a final note, reading this review and looking at the photographs here you'll notice that there are certain similarities between this and the Lexmark 150: price, design (although it's slightly more boxy, and doesn't look as elegant with a flip-top lid running the entire length of the printer) specification, everything is very similar, very, very similar in fact. Manufacturers buying technology from other makers to sell as their own is nothing new in this industry, particularly so in the printer market where developing printing technology from scratch is a costly process. And in the case of inkjet printers, where print cartridges can be expensive it works out in your favour. The number of printers around using the cartridges your printer supports, the less likely they are to be quickly discontinued — often the case when a manufacturer makes a single printer that then doesn't sell well — it's something to watch out for.



◀ ***Compare the 2010 to the 150c above, notice anything similar?***

Hidden Costs

Before you shell out almost £500 on a new way to de-forest the earth, put your credit card back in your pocket and think. While the price of the printer is a lot, it's peanuts compared to what you'll fork out in the long run on ink cartridges and print heads. When looking for a printer ask about the consumable prices — and their life span — the less ink you get from a print cartridge the more regularly you'll have to buy a new one. Both pricing and life spans have been taken into account in the scores given to each printer here. You should also consider the cost of any custom paper you may want.

HP 850c

Price: £440

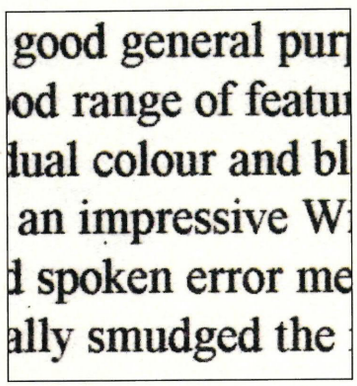
Manufacturer: Hewlett Packard

Contact: (01344) 361274

Overall: 7

The 850c is the most expensive printer in this roundup and not without good reason. Its paper specification puts it into the professional league of printers, with a maximum resolution of 600x600 and print speeds of six ppm!

But what's it like in real terms? Well for starters the 600x600 dpi is only usable for text, for colour graphics this drops to a more modest 300dpi. This low resolution is helped somewhat by Colour-Resolution Enhancement Technology (C-REt) and ColorSmart techniques that HP has developed. These apparently analyse the printed documents content and try to improve the colour usage and resolution where possible to make the pages look better. In reality, while these techniques did produce richer colours they didn't appear to do much for the definition of pictures in our tests. It seems a bit pointless to offer an inkjet with 600dpi black text-only output, when lower priced laser printers can do a better job of text output!


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▲ ***Text output from the HP printer is on a par with cheap lasers, a shame it's more expensive.***

The six pages per minute print speed is also only relevant to black prints, pages with colour content drop down to a more normal three, or as our tests revealed two to two-and-a-half pages per minute. But compared to other printers here this is still pretty snappy.

The faster print speeds combine with a dual print cartridge system and wide range of supported paper sizes — from A4 to B5, including envelopes (C6 and DL sizes) to make the 850c one of the best printers we've seen. However, it's also a hundred quid more than the next most expensive printer, yet doesn't offer enough advantages for home users to warrant the higher prices. If only the 600dpi mode supported graphics...



▲ ***It's the most expensive printer in this group test and also the most ugly — the 850c.***

The details...

MAKE	MODEL	PRICE	PAGES PER MINUTE B+W	PAGES PER MINUTE COLOUR	RESOLUTION	DUAL CARTRIDGE*	BUFFER SIZE
Epson	Stylus IIs	£249	2	5	1,720	yes	32k
Oki	2010	£340	3	1.5	600x300	yes	n/a
Lexmark	1020	£249	3	1.5	600x300	no	21Kb
Lexmark	150c	£350	3	1.5	600x300	yes	29Kb
HP	850c	£450	6	3	600x600	yes	32Kb

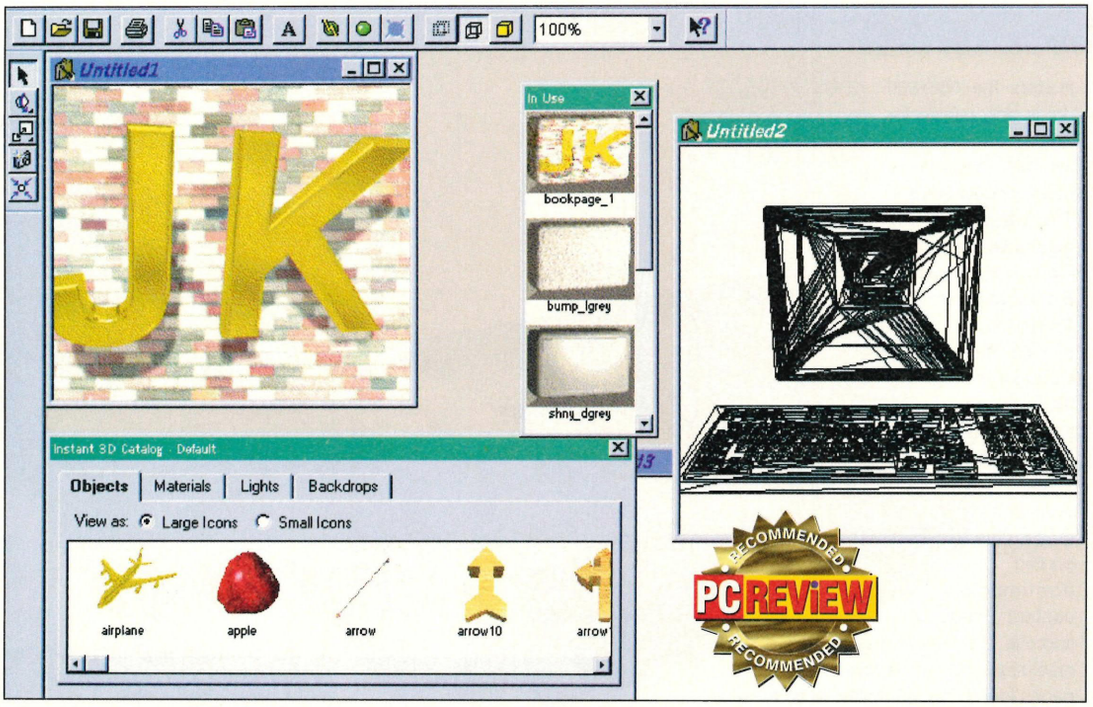
*** Dual cartridge means that the printer can hold both colour and black ink units at the same time, so cutting out the need to swap cartridges half way through a job and also giving better black print quality.**

Paper Tigers

When printing with an inkjet printer the paper you use can make a massive difference. Coated, glossy paper holds the squirted ink much better than normal plain paper and so gives much better results. PC Review has joined forces with Xerox to bring you a sample pack of inkjet paper so you compare it for yourself. The paper is 100gsm silicone coated giving fast drying times, the sample pack includes ten sheets of this paper plus labels and transparencies.

To get your sample call Xerox on (01923) 422 356.

Ever fancied printing your own T-shirts? Then rush down to your newsagent and reserve next months copy of PC Review now! Yes, you guessed, in the April issue we reveal all as we peel our shirts off and stick them into printers to show you how to create your own printed t-shirts!



Instant 3D

DTP and WP documents can be dull, but John Kennedy has found a way to give text that extra dimension.

Price: £43

Manufacturer: Visual Software

Contact: 0151 933 8772

Every so often I get the urge to include a nicely rendered three dimensional object in my current project. When used effectively, a cool bevelled logo with a shadow can make a page a lot more interesting by adding the illusion of depth. When the urge comes, I load up my ray tracing software, create some objects, and then spend several hours fine-tuning positions and getting the lighting exactly how I want it. Next thing I know it's 2am and the project is way behind schedule.

Instant 3D answers almost all my prayers at its very first attempt. It's almost, but not quite, a fully-fledged high quality image rendering program, but very much simpler and quicker to use. What makes it different from a normal every-day rendering program is that the scenes that can be created are limited to having just a single object, albeit with a texture and a backdrop. At first this might seem incredibly limiting, almost to the point of stupidity and uselessness. In fact it turns out that things aren't as bad as they might first appear.



As you can see, image quality is remarkable: especially when used in 16 million colour mode.

Instant 3D's purpose in life is to let you quickly (it turns out that 'instantly' is slightly optimistic, typical renders lasted about as long as a trip to the bathroom) create some chunky looking text or a pretty shaded object and slam them into your current document in 10 minutes. Though if you're intent on creating your own Toy Story, look elsewhere.

Assuming you do just want to create quick logos, a large collection of objects is supplied on the disc. These range from apples to jumbo jets with bucket loads of other types in-between. If you run out of objects you can also load 3D objects in the popular DXF or GED formats, which you'll find in public domain libraries and on the Internet. Alternatively you could create your own in a full rendering program.

Here are some examples using different materials and settings on the same piece of text.



The user interface is very Windows95 — even to the extent of calling up properties with the right mouse button.

Conversion

Aside from pre-defined objects, Instant 3D also allows text to be entered and then rendered in three dimensions. This is clearly the prime motive for Instant3D as there is great control over this 2D to 3D conversion process. You can choose the font and thickness of the letters, and also browse through a range of bevel styles and dimensions. It's possible to wrap text around an arc, line or a circle and control the spacing. The text can also be deformed in all manner of weird and wonderful ways, although this is something best attempted with caution — it's easy to create an almighty mess.

Unfortunately, there's no way to add to the existing library of materials and pre-defined lighting effects. However, you are provided with a large number to start with, and it is possible to alter the lights and material base colours.

As a Windows95 only program, the CD-ROM will begin installing itself as soon as you pop it in the drive. If you happen to be going the 32-bit way big time and use Word 7 or PowerPoint 7, you can call up your new 3D logo within these or any other OLE 2.0 compatible applications. Images can also be saved out in BMP, TIFF and Targe formats, so even if your application doesn't support OLE 2.0, you'll probably still be able to import 3D logos.

The supplied manual is pretty slim, but you should be able to master all the features of the program with only a little experimentation. Instant3D may be limited, but it's also fun. Creating very flash graphics was never as simple, as quick or enjoyable.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
3D renderer

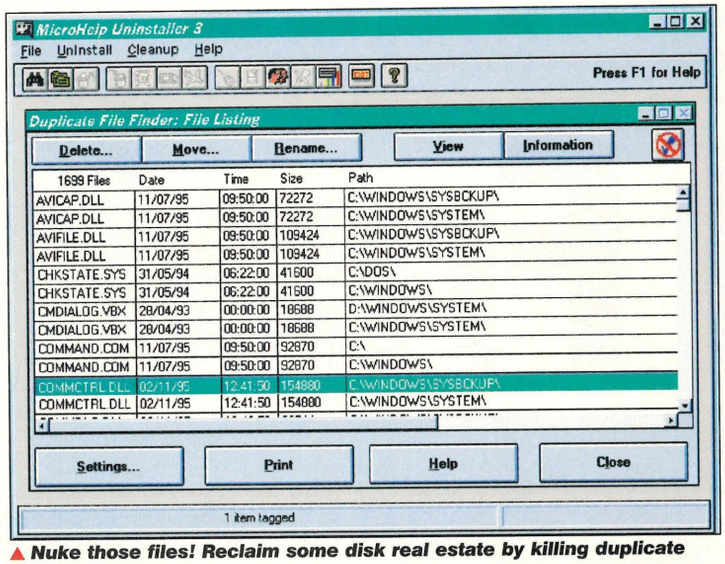
System requirements:
Windows 95 (or Windows NT), 8Mb RAM, CD-ROM drive.

Ease of use:
It don't get much better!

Performance:
Its fast speed may be due to the one object limit but it's still damn quick to use and thus very enjoyable.

Value for money:
Great software with a great price! Worth having for novelty value alone.

9



▲ ***Nuke those files! Reclaim some disk real estate by killing duplicate files with Uninstaller3***

Uninstaller 3

DISK ONLY

Price: £43

Manufacturer: MicroHelp Inc

Contact: (01675) 466 467

Reclaim your hard disk with this vital utility. John Kennedy finds some space for it.

We've all been there: installed a shareware utility into the Windows set up, tried it, got bored with it and deleted it. Or rather, *tried* to delete it. You'll know yourself how difficult it is to delete all the files related to a program — DLLs, DRV files and the like. Windows 95 tries to get around the problem, but it's still not perfect. Step forward then, Uninstaller 3.

There are several options to play with when Unistaller has installed itself (yes, an uninstall routine is included). One of the most obvious is to remove an old application — you select the offending article and the uninstaller software will hunt it down and destroy it like the dog it is. You can then free up more space by searching for duplicate files or finding Orphan EXE and DLL files (and nuking them). The Windows Cleanup routine will take a good guess at making a list of all the files it reckons Microsoft put on your disk for fun, and give you a big list (so you can, again, nuke them).

Uninstaller cannot know the worth of each file, so you'll need to keep your wits about you when deleting files. To be fair, the manual does an admirable job of explaining the different sorts of files you'll come across, and it won't delete anything unless you specifically ask it to. To help you, there's an option to view (or play) each file before you nuke it. There are a few bonus utilities as well. As a sideline, Uninstaller3 makes it possible to copy files between different disks and machines. For example, if you install a new hard drive into your system as the primary drive, yet also keep your existing one, it can be a nightmare trying to re-install all your software. Uninstaller will hunt down all the associated files and move them for you.

However, the main purpose of Uninstaller is to get back some space on your hard drive and on my much abused system it managed to claw back about 75Mb. It might save you money by postponing the need for a new drive.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Utility program

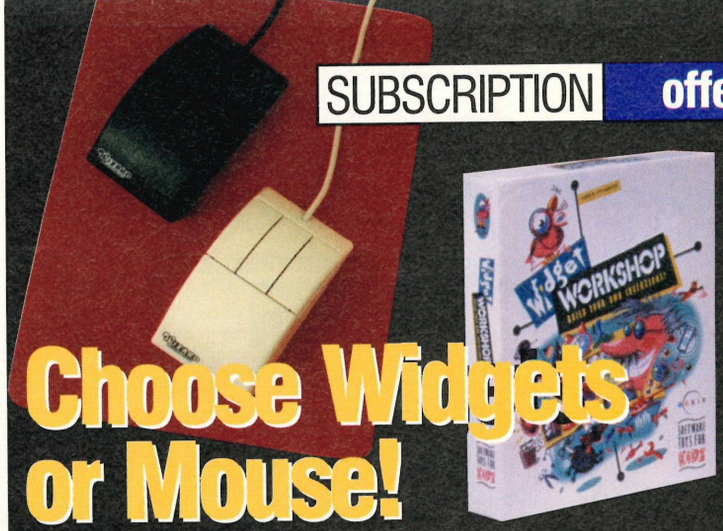
System requirements:
Windows 3.1 or better.

Ease of use:
A good manual, makes UnInstaller pretty easy to use even for inexperienced users.

Performance:
Compared to similar utilities it's pretty speedy.

Value for money:
More useful to Win 3.1 users with stubborn files than '95 fans who will already have a form of uninstall.

7



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Wiggling his stick for all to see, Pat Fox rounds-up the latest controllers and puts them through their paces.

Control Freak

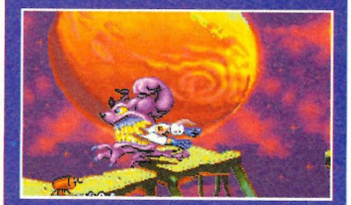
A good joystick can make the difference between life and death, so it's important to get one that suits your needs. You can get hold of a good stick for as little as £15, but the ones we have tested go up to £60 — in general you get what you pay for when buying a joystick, but not always...

We tested the joysticks on the following games: Terminal Velocity, Tie Fighter and Descent 2, all of which require accuracy if you're going to get beyond the first few levels and durability if the joystick is going to last more than a few days.



A Pad of My Own

Meanwhile, with the emergence of more arcade-style games on the PC, often converted directly from consoles, it's becoming more and more necessary to get your hands on a good joypad. The requirements are that they should be hard-wearing — arcade games tend to take their toll quickly — comfortable to hold for long periods, and have at least four buttons, if they are to be of any use in the newest games. We put these pads to the ultimate test of a few rounds up against the king of all platform games, Earthworm Jim (reviewed this issue) to see how they shaped up.



PC Navigator



Price: £29.99
Manufacturer: Logic 3
Contact: (0811) 9000024

Bit of a crap name, but in fact a very good all-round joystick. Although it might seem unfeasibly large, it boasts four fire buttons (a trigger and three thumb buttons) and a coolie hat, all mounted on the stick, which itself is ergonomically designed and very comfortable to use. The base is so weighty that there is no need for suckers to stick it to a table or whatever; it also carries a further two buttons which control the auto fire function, and a wheel which allows you to adjust the tension of the stick to your liking. This was by some way my favourite of all the sticks that I tried in these tests, being comfortable to use even for extended periods, reassuringly sturdy and commendably accurate.

PCR VERDICT

Comment: **A good, weighty, accurate joystick, and not too steep.**

8

PC Pro



Price: £39.99
Manufacturer: Gravis
Contact: (01604) 768711

The Gravis PC Pro features five fire buttons: three on the stick itself, and then another two on the base which can be configured to emulate any of the other three buttons. In addition, there is a throttle wheel, and a huge wheel for adjusting the tension on the stick. Unfortunately it seems to have been designed by someone who doesn't play games very much: the buttons on the stick are too small, the throttle wheel is tiny and inaccessible, and the stick itself is too narrow. The design is a bit dodgy too, with a truly nasty black, grey and gold colour scheme, and an uncanny and unpleasant resemblance to a certain part of the male anatomy...If this is worth £40 then I'm a dutchman.

PCR VERDICT

Comment: **Ugly, uncomfortable, and far too expensive.**

5

Tornado



Price: £12.99
Manufacturer: Logic 3
Contact: (0811) 9000024

Not everyone can afford to lash out over sixty quid on what is in effect a non-essential item, so at the bargain basement end of the joystick scale we find the Tornado, a plain stick which does the job without any of the frills. There are two fire buttons on the stick, as well as a toggle switch for the autofire, while the strangely-shaped base carries a couple of sliders which act as simple trim controls to adjust the stick's calibration. The base has suckers to hold the stick down leaving your other hand for whatever activities you might deem necessary. As a whole the unit feels a bit on the lightweight and flimsy side, but it performs fine — although I did find the action a bit stiff. It's not the best looking object I've ever seen, but it's not expensive and it does what it's meant to. And at least it isn't as obviously phallic as the Gravis PC Pro.

PCR VERDICT

Comment: **Nothing special but not bad for the money.**

7

SideWinder 3D



Price: £59.99
Manufacturer: Microsoft
Contact: (01734) 270001

A rather strange-looking beast, the SideWinder doesn't look like much but turns out to be very competent indeed. Boasting a plentiful eight buttons dotted around the base and the stick, as well as a coolie hat, rudder and throttle controls, there's enough here for just about every game you care to try. In fact I was hard-pushed to find a game that actually made use of even half of the buttons, but the potential is there to configure it for even the most button-heavy flight simulator. The base is nice and heavy and the unit as a whole feels sturdy and well made. When playing it's a little on the sensitive side, but you soon get used to that and find that this is a very slick, commendably useable piece of kit.

PCR VERDICT

Comment:
Looks a bit weird, but plays very well. A bit pricey, perhaps.

8

PC SprintPad



Price: £14.99
Manufacturer: Logic 3
Contact: (0811) 9000024

The SprintPad is a handy little controller, featuring four thumb buttons and two "shoulder" buttons along the top. All the buttons can be independently configured if desired for two types of autofire — either rapid bursts when pressed or constant autofire. The pad itself is comfortable enough to hold — although perhaps slightly small for people like me with large hands — and all the buttons are easily accessible. Overall it's a fine pad, with a surprising range of configuration options that make it very versatile and by far the best of the pads reviewed here — and it's cheap.

PCR VERDICT

Comment:
A very versatile pad, with some nifty features.

8

Gamestar



Price: £39.99
Manufacturer: EuroMax
Contact: (01262) 601006

Not strictly a joypad, the GameStar is actually a strange sort of keyboard alternative: it plugs into your keyboard port, while the keyboard itself plugs into a custom box of tricks. The box allows you to configure the GameStar pad to perform keyboard operations, the idea being that it allows joypad control of games that have no joystick support. It generally works well, and there is custom software so that you can save your favourite configurations. One problem is that most games have joystick/joypad support anyway, so why bother? It would have been nice if it was possible to use it as a standard joypad too.

PCR VERDICT

Comment:
A neat idea, but of limited use. A bit on the expensive side.

7

Gravis GamePad



Price: £24.99
Manufacturer: Gravis
Contact: (1279) 600204

Initially the GamePad looks pretty good — with its clean lines and simple design it might seem promising, but unfortunately the good looks are only skin deep. The idea of the design is that it should be usable by both left- and right-handed games players, which is a noble sentiment, but the problem is that it makes the stick rather uncomfortable to use. The unit lacks any concessions to ergonomic styling, so it sits awkwardly in the hand whether you're a righty or a lefty, and is particularly awkward for those with long fingers (that's me). If you can put up with this, then it's a competent pad, with the requisite four buttons for arcade play but very little else to recommend it — there are many better examples around.

PCR VERDICT

Comment:
Looks good, but not great to use. Can be used by left-handers.

6

Buying a joystick

There are a few things to look for when buying a new joystick — remember, you're probably going to be using it for extended periods so it's as well to take your time when choosing your purchase.

- First and foremost, try the stick out for comfort — if it's too small or too big it'll just be uncomfortable.
- Like most such purchases, you usually get what you pay for: if you're going to be using it a great deal, then it's worth paying out a bit extra for a better-quality stick.
- Make sure it is the right sort of controller for your type of games — it's no use buying a gamepad if you're going to be playing a flight sim, or an analogue joystick for platform games.
- Joysticks, particularly analogue ones, are notoriously easy to break, so keep the receipt in a safe place in case you ever have to return it.

Give 'em stick!

Among the best joysticks we reviewed here is the Microsoft Sidewinder 3D, and we're giving one away just for the hell of it. Simply answer the following question:

How many buttons are there on the Sidewinder 3D?

Mark your answer "The joy of sticks compo" and send it to the following address:

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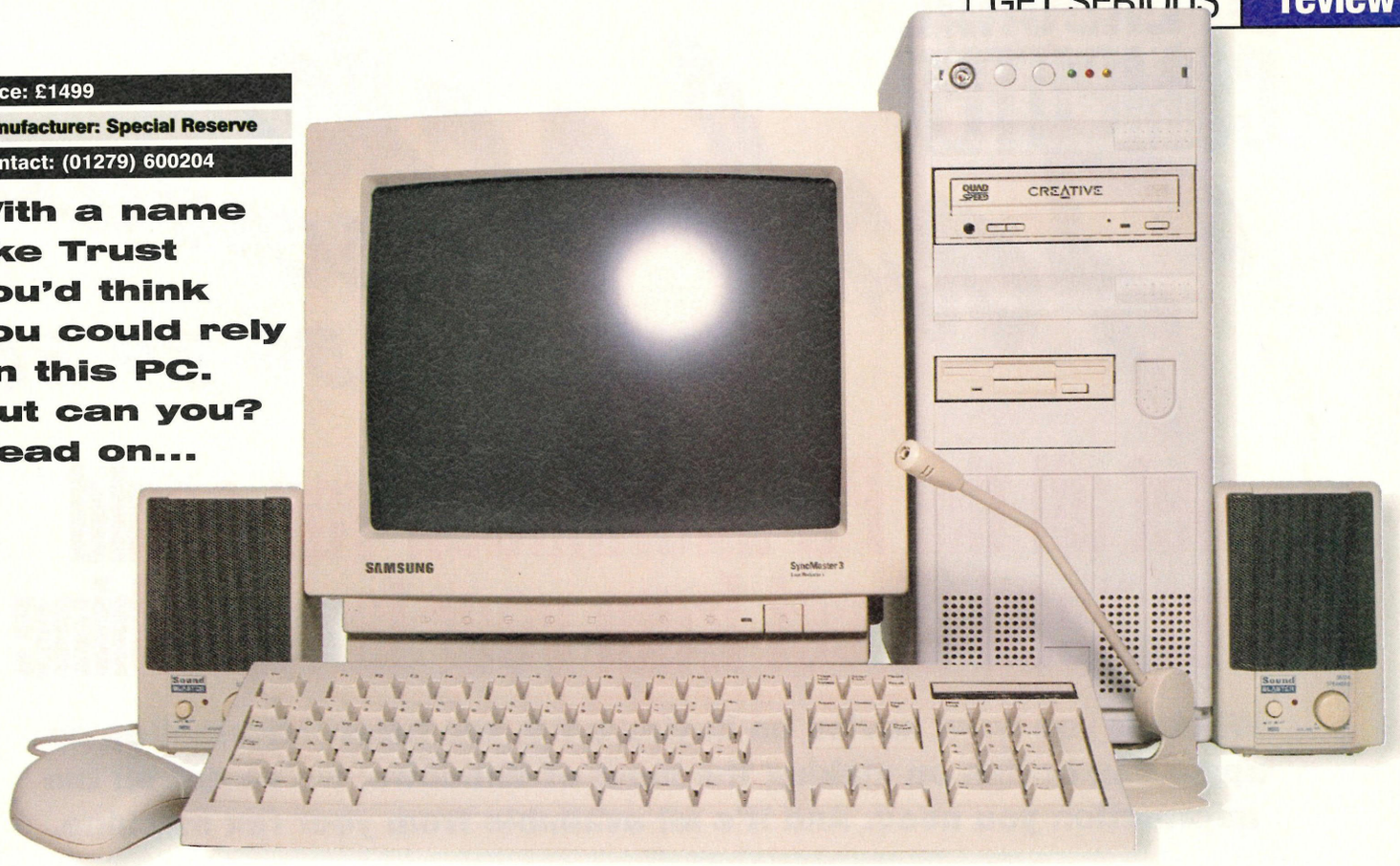
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Price: £1499

Manufacturer: Special Reserve

Contact: (01279) 600204

With a name like Trust you'd think you could rely on this PC. But can you? Read on...



Trust PC

Here at PC Review we unsurprisingly see more than a few PCs for testing. When new models arrive at our offices they are logged, and then stored away until the chosen reviewer finally gets to see them. In this way we can be sure that the reviewers see the machine as the manufacturer intended and thus how their customers will see it.

Most systems arrive in good condition, although we do get the odd one here and there that's sustained damage in transit or where perhaps an internal fitting has come free. So when we took delivery of the Trust PC from Special Reserve we weren't too worried to hear a rattling sound coming from inside the case. No really we weren't.

On opening it up however we were frankly amazed and shocked — there's just no way the internal state of this particular PC could have come about due to rough transit. The Pentium heat-sink had come away from the chip and was dangling around inside — not unknown of course. But then there was the cabling too — instead of being neatly tucked away with cable ties, the leads were flopping around, and bunched together with gaffa tape! Worse was to come underneath this lot, the same off-grey gaffa tape was being used to hold the cables into their sockets on the various drives! But the best was left 'till last — following the cables back to the motherboard revealed that neither the hard or floppy drive ribbon cables were connected to their respective interfaces!

Once we'd corrected the faults the Trust PC ran pretty well. Powered by a Pentium 100 with a 256K secondary cache it delivered respectable performance, and the 1Gigabyte plus hard drive and quad speed CD drive produced good access times. Sadly the Trident video card let the side down — although a PCI card it was sluggish, leaving us waiting while it redrew the screen on more than a few occasions. Special Reserve will apparently be offering an option to change this to the much better Diamond Stealth graphics card — definitely worth doing.

Cock-up Corner

Opening the case of the Trust PC revealed a botch of a build.

- Loose Pentium fan and heat-sink
- IDE hard drive lead not attached to IDE interface
- Floppy drive lead not connected to floppy drive interface
- Cables to CD-drive, hard drive etc held in place by tape

We contacted Special Reserve, the manufacturer, and asked it for its comments. Ed Uncle, PC Product Manager, told us "I'm very disturbed that the PC arrived like that, something obviously went very wrong. They must have worked lose in transit. That's not how we usually do our machines or how they're now shipped."

When we asked Ed Uncle about the use of gaffa tape he responded "We used gaffa tape in the past to hold some cables in place, they were supplied to us like that. Now we use glue."

Room for manoeuvre

Inside the mini-tower itself however, there's considerable room for expansion. The motherboard supports Pentium speeds up to and including 166, there are two spare ISA and PCI slots, and four free drive bays.

In the end the Trust PC isn't a bad model, certainly not the worst we've seen in terms of raw processing power and specification. What let it down however was the appalling build quality — there's no way PCs should ever be sent out like this. Although Special Reserve tell us it was an accident or damaged in transit we did receive it in this condition, as would a normal user, and so we obviously had to take this into account in the final score, reducing it several points.

Specification

Processor: Pentium 100, expandable to P166
RAM: 8Mb, expandable to 128Mb
Secondary Cache: 256K, expandable to 512K
Hard Drive: Seagate EIDE mode 4
CD-ROM Drive: Sound Blaster Quad Speed
Video Card: Trident
Sound Card: Creative Labs Sound Blaster 16
Drive Bays: Four free half-height bays, three with front panels
Slots: 3 ISA, 3 PCI, 2 of each spare

PCR VERDICT

Category:
PC system

System requirements:
N/A

Ease of use:
With its insides this would be a troublesome PC for both new and old users alike, but...

Performance:
...once its working its no slouch.

Value for money:
Reasonable value and reasonable spec let down by poor build quality.

5

WHAT PERSONAL COMPUTER

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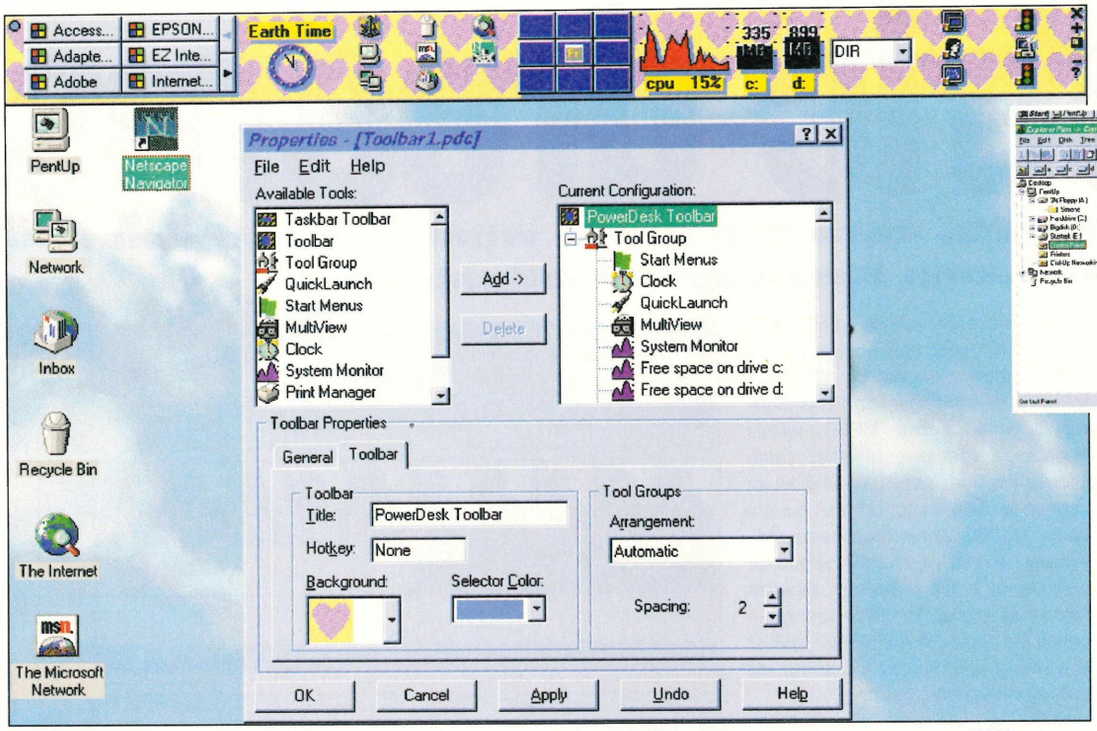
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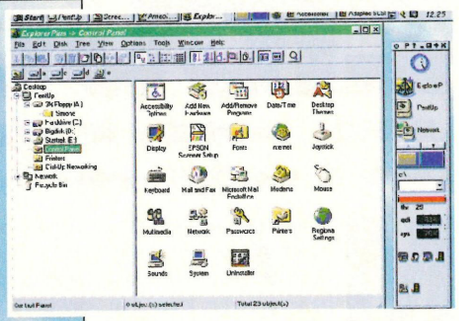
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All the articles listed are taken from the How to section of What Personal Computer magazine. The magazine costs just £1.99 and is available on the 17th of every month from your local newsagent.



◀ *We apologise for John's background pattern, if you can bear it look at the options available.*

▼ *Everything you want is on hand.*



PowerDesk

John Kennedy asks why, if Windows95 is so powerful, would anyone need a utility such as PowerDesk?

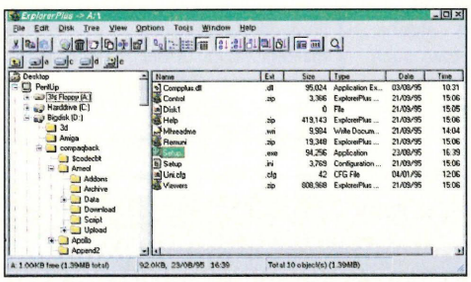
It must be very difficult for utility programmers when something like Windows95 appears. With so much time, effort and money spent by Microsoft on trying to create the ultimate in user-friendly operating systems, what could be left for other utility programmers to add? Windows95 already incorporates so many features as standard: a task bar, start menu, powerful help system, shortcuts, file Explorer and more. But the designers of PowerDesk have set out to show how even the best can be improved.

Price: £35

Manufacturer: Symantec

Contact: 0181 848 1414

The major function of PowerDesk is a new File Manager — PowerDesk's version is called ExplorerPlus. Within its own user-definable tool bar you'll find a list of drives and plenty of file search and display options, these are surprisingly useful — being able to quickly open up windows for different drives is very handy. It's also got the very useful ability to deal with ZIP archives as easily as with ordinary directories. Because this Explorer works so easily with multiple drives and directories, it's worth keeping it open all the time in case you need it.



◀ *ExplorePlus - File handling heaven.*

If you're worried that a large ExplorerPlus window is going to cover your entire monitor however, then you'll be pleased to hear of PowerDesk's MultiView facility. Multiview creates several 'virtual monitors' which you can toggle between almost instantly. It's surprising how useful this can be: instead of opening and shutting a dozen windows, you can arrange your display in the several virtual screens and pop between them as needed, with only the windows on the currently viewed virtual monitor shown. Coming from a (nameless) computer system which provides multiple screens as standard, I felt right at home — users of Windows 3 utilities like PC Tools will also be familiar with this kind of approach.

What you fill the rest of the tool bar with is up to you: multiple clocks for different time-zones, system and performance monitors, specialist start menus, an instant DOS command line or a row of your favourite program icons. Some features are most certainly already available from the Windows95 environment, but the beauty of PowerDesk is that you can choose exactly which ones you want to make available.

Another good reason for getting PowerDesk is that the documentation is actually rather good. Unlike the flimsy document you get with Windows95, the PowerDesk manual might actually teach you something about how the Windows95 operating system can be used to your advantage. From that point of view, PowerDesk could be described as a bargain. Try it and see.

PCR VERDICT

Category:
Systems utility suite

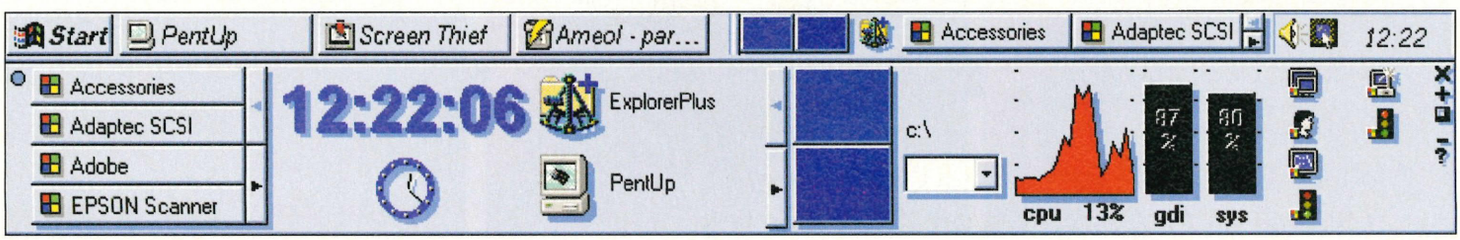
System requirements:
Windows 95

Ease of use:
A good manual, and easy installation make PowerDesk a joy to use.

Performance:
It does what it claims, and makes Windows 95 better.

Value for money:
Improves Windows 95, provides tools you didn't have before, it even explains how '95 ticks.

8



▲ *The main PowerDesk toolbar. With the DOS command line you can even carry out MS-DOS functions whenever you want.*

Electric dreams

JPEG, MPEG, MJPEG, Jake the Peg — what is it and what can it do for you? John Kennedy investigates.

Moving video on the PC is becoming more and more common, but you might be surprised to know that the hardware necessary to create your own digital studio is now becoming much more affordable.

If you have ever tried to edit home video tapes, you will know what a chore it can be. Without resorting to ridiculously expensive computer controlled Video decks it can be a nightmare trying to locate the correct sections on the video tape for assembling into one coherent section of final footage.

So how would you feel about a system which stored all your home video on disk, and allowed you to drag and drop sequences together as easily as moving paragraphs in a word processor? Amazingly, that degree of control is now available on your PC for under £400 thanks to the technological miracle called MJPEG.

MJPEG is an image format which allows TV quality pictures to be stored on hard disk, and replayed in real-time. The pictures don't look as though they have been "computerised" and capturing them is as easy as pressing play on your video camera or VCR. The footage can then be played back directly to video tape once you have placed the sequences in the right order. You can even create a new soundtrack or add digital wipe or dissolve effects.

Too good to be true? It sounds as though it might be, but it actually works.



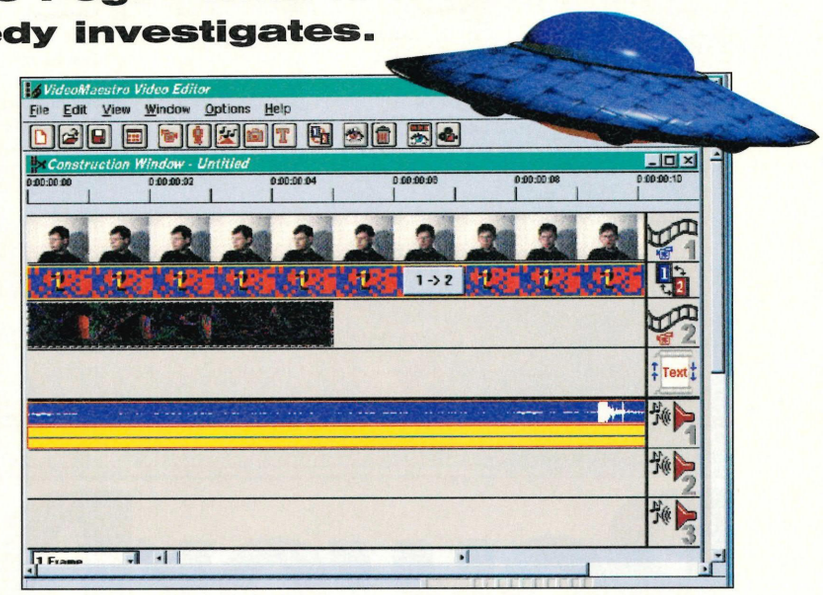
Smile, you're on Candid Camera! Believe it or not it's now very easy to take video from a trusty Camcorder and edit it on your PC.

You will probably have heard of MPEG, which is a format commonly used for storing moving video on CD-ROM. MPEG is different from MJPEG is many ways: whereas the MPEG format encodes a sequence of video using information from both past and future frames to help build up the current frame, MJPEG stores each frame individually. In fact, a MJPEG sequence consists of a list of entirely separate frames all stored in JPEG format — hence the name "Motion JPEG". (JPEG is a widely used format for saving still images using compression).

MPEG is often used with CDROM. Unfortunately, although playback is relatively easy, creating a good quality MPEG stream in the first place is far from simple. As the encoding process looks at forthcoming and previous frames, there is a lot of buffering and processing involved. Although a chip for MPEG playback costs about £30, a chip for MPEG encoding costs many tens of times more — boards for the PC which will create an MPEG file from moving video cost thousands of pounds.

MJPEG — Motion JPEG — is a good compromise. Chips which can encode and playback JPEG files fast enough to work at 25 frames a second (video speeds) are relatively cheap. However, as each JPEG frame is considerably larger than an MPEG frame it is necessary to make sure the data can be supplied from the disk fast enough: so you'll want a good, fast hard drive.

Cards such as Spea's CrunchIt! allow video to be played, recorded, edited and replayed with frame accuracy. Unlike MPEG in which every frame depends on the others, frame-accurate MJPEG editing is straightforward. Once the frames are known to the editing software, the PC can decode the JPEG file, add titles or perform mixing or wiping, and then re-encode it into JPEG again for playback. It would even be possible with effort to merge clips creating impossible stunts or fake video clips.



▲ ***The editing software allows video sequences to be cut and mixed: notice the many video transitions possible — something which you couldn't do before without some extremely expensive video hardware.***

Advanced Pegging

A MJPEG card can be used for a lot more than editing home videos. Remember at the heart of a card such as CrunchIt! is a system which can pump out TV video style images at 25 frames a second: images which are

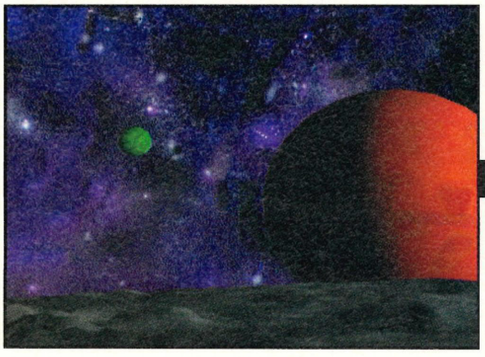
Jargon

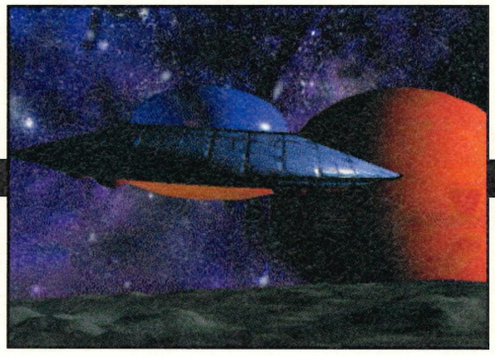
MPEG Motion Pictures Expert Group — A file standard for storing moving video and sound.

MPEG1 is most common today, and used to store video on CDROM. MPEG2 is coming "Real Soon Now" and will include a massive increase in quality and better compression.

JPEG Joint Photographics Experts Group — A File standard for storing still images. It works by discarding fine detail which the human eye finds difficult to notice.

MJPEG Motion JPEG — a collection of individual JPEG images, dealt with as a sequence.









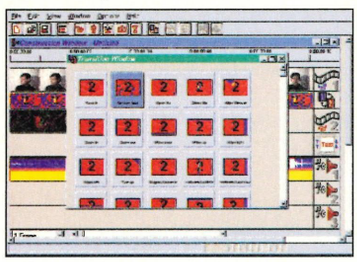
▲ ***This is part of a sequence grabbed and then saved as an 8-bit AVI file for loading into a 3D rendering program. The MJPEG images you will see on screen are of a much higher quality — in fact they look like TV.***

ready to record directly on to video tape. The point is, why limit yourself to images captured by the card itself?

Many video editing suites (including the software supplied with CrunchIt! and others such as Adobe Premier) are sufficiently generic to be able to load and create video footage in several formats. You're in no way limited to MJPEG for input or output.

This means you can output your films in an AVI format which your friends can play back on their systems. More interestingly, it also means that if you have a 3D rendering program such as LightWave or Visual Reality there's nothing to stop you from loading the animation into the editing software. Your animations will now replay at full colour, full frame-rate and in a form ready for recording to video. Captured video can also be incorporated into rendered images: providing a "live" image on a rendered Television set.

With a little effort and imagination you could soon be creating video footage which would not look out-of-place in the latest Hollywood blockbuster — all with the PC on your desk.



In many ways, when it comes to capturing video with an MJPEG board, the raw processing speed of your PC is less important that the speed of your disk drive: it's the disk drive which has the task of spooling the data into the custom graphics chip. For this reason, a very fast disk drive is essential. For replay the speed is slightly less critical, which means replaying animations can be done on a slightly slower system.

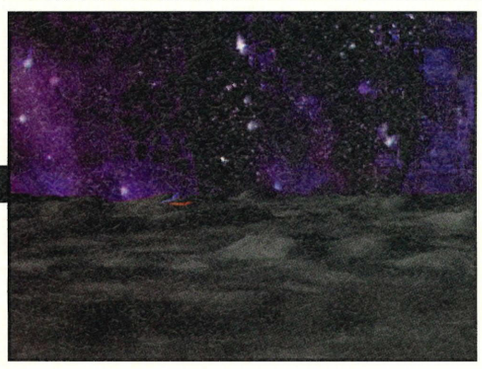
It almost goes without saying that you do need a large amount of disk space free for storing video: preferably an entire disk drive or partition should be set aside for storing images. If you are thinking of making short films, you'll need to utilise 1Gb or bigger drives. If you're really serious consider some form of external backing storage device as well — a DAT drive or CD-ROM burner (we reviewed the HP drive in the February 1995 issue) for example.

The Future of Image Compression

Whilst cards like CrunchIt! and current video editing software are very impressive, things look set to get even more fun. The next generation of video cameras are starting to appear: and they capture frames digitally rather than on analogue tape. Frames can be downloaded via high-speed links for editing on a PC and then sent back to the video hardware for playback.

Work on fractal based image compression systems has yielded some very impressive results. Reports indicate that compression ratios and image quality are both extremely high: to the extent of making 25 frames a second video via modem possible.

Methinks we're on the verge of affordable, high quality video editing systems. So watch this space!



◀ ***Combining live action with computer generated material is simple. If it's an AVI file, it can be loaded and replayed on video. Alternatively you can convert a video sequence to AVI format and give it to your mates who can play it on their PCs. Think of what you can do with sound - and you can do it with video!***

Spea CrunchIt!



Price: £350

Manufacturer: Diamond Multi

Contact: (0171) 625 5947

Four hundred quid for a card!?! Yeah, but it's worth it to put Beadle out of a job...

CrunchIt! is an ISA card which can capture and replay JPEG files at 25 frames a second. It's easy to install, although if you want to capture a sound track you will need to make use of your own sound card. A suite of software is included, and this takes care of capturing video at a number of different resolutions, editing and playback. A good hard drive is essential: the EIDE drive on my Pentium wasn't enough to avoid missing the occasional frame, but the playback was very smooth. Input and output is via a standard Phono-style plug and is PAL compatible – you can therefore plug in a camcorder, capture your holiday film and then send the output to the VCR. As well as normal VHS, S-VHS is supported for extra quality.

The editing software allows two sequences to be cut to frame accuracy, and mixed with several different wipes. Multiple soundtracks are allowed too, so you can easily provide a consistent music track and not have to worry about losing the original voice tracks.

Standard AVI and FLI can be loaded too, which means combining computer-generated animations or subtitles is straightforward. You can then preview your film before generating a new MJPEG sequence: a task which will take a few seconds a frame depending on your PC.

Spea's CrunchIt! is an ideal entry into non-linear editing and computer animation. It's a lot of money but then you can have a lotta fun with it. Hopefully, if enough people use them to create trick videos, Beadle might be out of a job!

PCR VERDICT

Category:
MJPEG capture and replay card

System requirements:
486, 8Mb RAM fast, big hard drive.

Ease of use:
Takes all the hard work out of video editing.

Performance:
Fast hard drive for best results, good SCSI system.

Value for money:
For £350, this could be the most interesting hardware you are likely to buy.

8

C++ in 3D Ware

Can't program? Don't worry, neither could we until we'd read Mike James' excellent C++ tutorial. Just a shame we haven't learned to type yert.

Over the last couple of months we've looked at the basic idea of getting a programme running and using the two fundamental instructions of any programming language. Now it's time to move on to more practical matters. This month we reveal how to create your own functions and commands, by breaking programs down into lots of little commands it'll be easier to write and understand. The listing this month adds a bat to our game, started last month, by using our new found user-defined functions. When typing in these listings ensure you've entered it exactly as shown. Several readers have called us with problems only to find they've missed a semi-colon or bracket — please check.

Fully Functioning

1 C++ is a very simple language with very few commands. Part of its power comes from the ability to build on the built-in functions by adding your own ones. User defined functions come after the 'main' section of the listing. Once defined you can write instructions like result=add_numbers (10,50) or result=add_numbers(x,y) and the two values will be added by the new function — of course this isn't useful because you already have the + sign to do this but it's only an example.

Return to Sender

2 Most functions you write take data supplied, do something with it and return a result of some kind, the add_numbers example takes two numbers and gives the added up result. When writing a function we therefore need to tell the computer its name and the type of data it'll accept and return. The line 'int add(int a, int b)' says that the function is called "add_numbers" and it takes two integers (whole numbers) and returns an integer. Next come the instructions that dictate what it'll do, before finally using the /* bold */ return command to describe what's returned when it finishes.

The Great Void

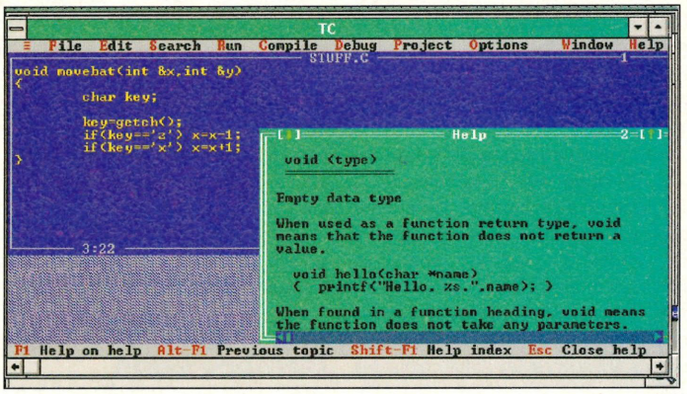
3 So far so good, but what if you don't want a function to return a value? In this case you should declare it as a type "void" - 'void fire(int x,int y,char c)'. Another consideration is that you have to include a "function prototype" at the start of your program so that the C compiler knows what you are going to do later. To do this simply copy the first line of your function declaration to the start of the program.

That's All Folks!

4 Finally, it's important to note that any variables you use in a function have no effect on other variables elsewhere in the program or other functions. So a, b and temp in add_numbers have nothing to do with other variables called a, b or temp in other parts of your program. If you change a or b in the function there'll be no change to the original variables passed to the function — the link is one way only. For two way links put an '&' in front of the variable definition: 'int add(int &a, int &b)'. Now see right for this month's listing...

This month's listing

Here we use two new supplied functions - kbhit() is true if a key has been pressed and false otherwise while getch() returns the character corresponding to the key pressed. Keys z and x move the bat — four Xs with a space at each end. The function cputs puts the bat on screen.



▲ ***Check out the help facility for more details on the C++ language.***

```
#include <stdio.h>
#include <conio.h>
void ball(int x,int y);
void blank(int x,int y);
void bat(int x,int y);
void movebat(int &x,int &y);
void delay();

main()
{
int x=10,y=10;
int vx=1,vy=1;
int bx=40,by=22;
clrscr();
_setcursortype(_NOCURSOR);
bat(bx,by);
while(1==1){
     ball(x,y);
     if               (kbhit())
movebat(bx,by);
     bat(bx,by);
     if (y==by-1){
         if(x>bx  &&  x<(bx+5))
vy=-vy;
       };
     if(x>=78) vx=-vx;
     if(x<=1) vx=-vx;
     if(y>=23) vy=-vy;
     if(y<=1) vy=-vy;
     delay();
     blank(x,y);
     x=x+vx;
     y=y+vy;
     }
}

void ball(int x,int y)
{
gotoxy(x,y);
putch('*');
}

void blank(int x,int y)
{
gotoxy(x,y);
putch(' ');
}

void bat(int x,int y)
{
gotoxy(x,y);
cputs(" XXXX ");
}

void movebat(int &x,int &y)
{char key;
 key=getch();
 if(key=='z') x=x-1;
 if(key=='x') x=x+1;
}
void delay()
{for(int i=0;i<32000;i++){};
}
```

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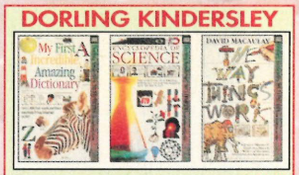
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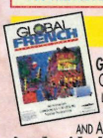
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PCR 3

WaveSE

Equalisation and cropping are explained by Tony Horgan in this month's WaveSE tutorial.

Last month we covered the basics of sampling a sound with WaveSE, the sample editing package included with the December 1995 issue of PC Review. This month we'll take a look at the essential task of pixel-perfect editing.

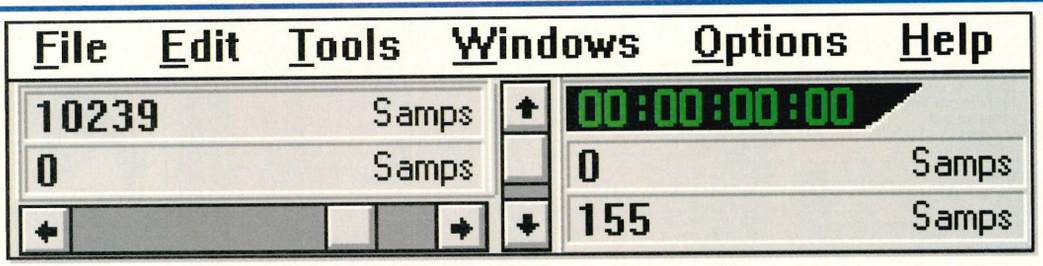
Although we used the editing tools last month, the trimming was not very accurate. This was fine for creating a Windows boot-up sample, but if you want to use your samples in musical applications you'll need to learn how to make cuts with surgical precision.

You may be wondering what was wrong with the way we edited the sample last month. After all, it sounded fine. However, there may well have been half a second or so of silence at the start of the sample. In a musical context this could have disastrous consequences, because while all of your other instruments are being played in perfect time by the sequencer software, the short silent part of that sample would make it sound as if it was being played out of time with the rest of the music.

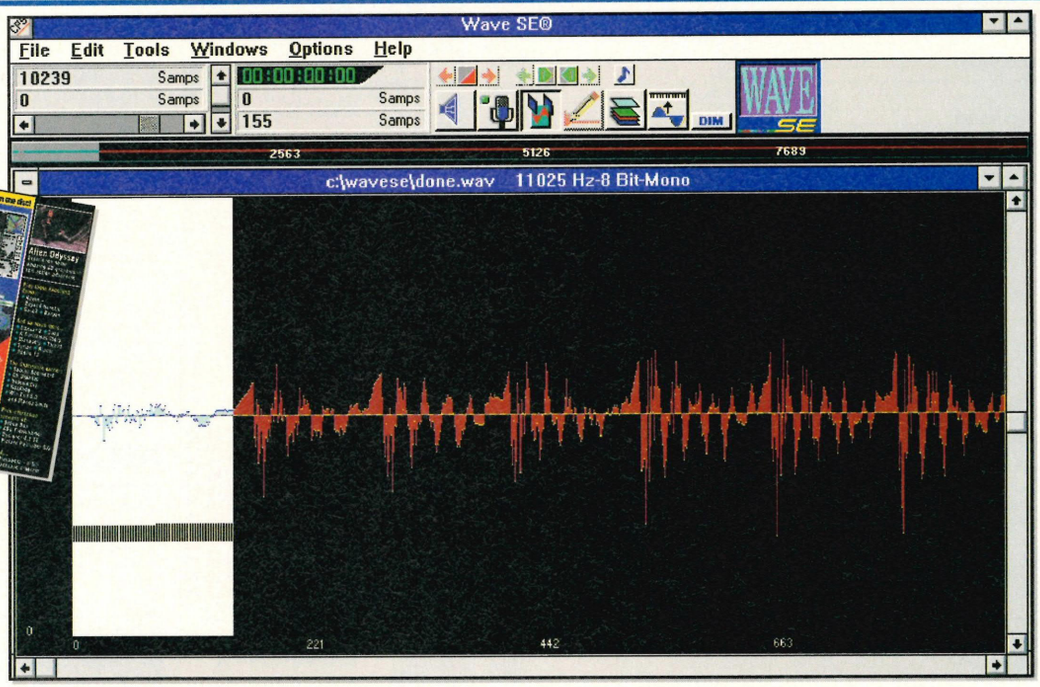


Wave goodbye

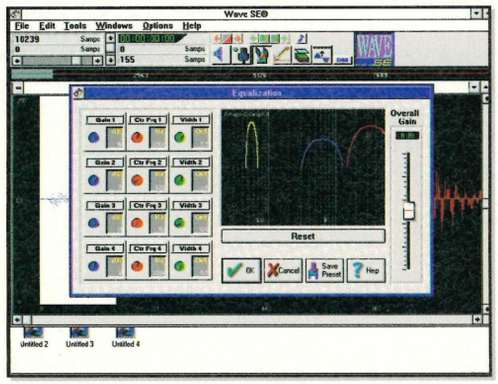
This lovingly crafted tutorial is for the cool December issue cover disk utility WaveSE. If you missed out on getting your copy of PC Review that month and still want to get this powerful sound editing program, worth a rather dandy £79, you can still get it from our back issues department. Call them on 01858 468888. Then again you can upgrade to the latest version of WaveSE by calling Et Cetera distribution on 01706 228039.



1 ZOOMING IN: ***WaveSE allows you to zoom right in on any part of the sampled sound, close enough for you to make incredibly accurate splices. There are two sliders found just beneath the menu bar. These are used to zoom in to view the sample wave at higher magnification levels. The leftmost slider controls the 'horizontal' zooming and the other controls the 'vertical' zooming. Use these to home in on the part of the sound you want to crop or affect.***



2 TRIMMING SILENCE ***After zooming in on the start of the sample you can see the quiet part of the sample before the main sound (quiet sounds are represented by a waveform that only slightly deviates from the centre line). Highlighting this and selecting Cut will remove it from the sample, leaving you with a nice neat sound that's trimmed to perfection. Always make sure you cut the sample wave at a point where the wave crosses the centre line to avoid any clicks when the sample is played.***



3 EQUALISATION (EQ) ***This tool allows you to alter the relative amounts of different frequencies in sound. For example, cymbals would be 'EQed' to accentuate the high frequencies and remove any background hum, while bass sounds may have their lower frequencies boosted. WaveSE has a number of preset EQ effects and a very powerful four-band EQ section. From here you can boost or reduce the volumes of four user-specified frequency bands by your required amount. For example, increase the lower frequencies by 20%, boost the top-end by 50% and reduce a mid-range frequency bracket by 30% with just a bit of knob twiddling. The knobs are as follows: Gain (controls the volume of the specified frequency band); Freq (sets the frequency of the band); and Width (adjusts the amount of frequencies to be affected either side of that defined with the Freq control).***

Watch out . . .

Remember, sampling music CDs is illegal. So although you may be tempted to sample just a little bit of a song — don't — it's against the law. If you're looking for a copyright free CD sample (that you can record) you could do a lot worse than calling Time & Space on 01442 870681. You could also try a magazine called Sound On Sound (from most large newsagents) this is dedicated to sound sampling, in it you'll find lots of firms advertising similar discs.

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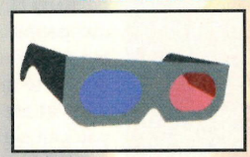




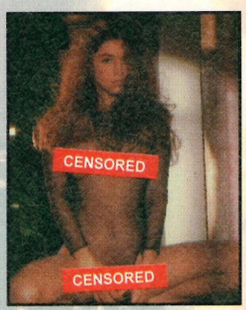
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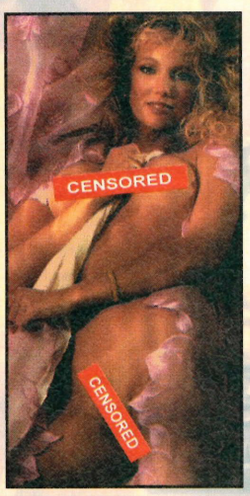
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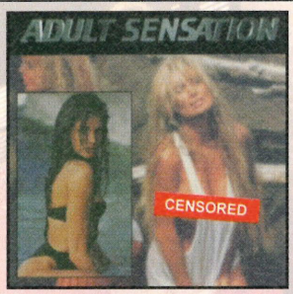


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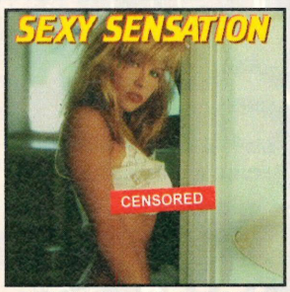






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Q&A

It's that time of the month again when our intrepid technical heroes strap on their propellers and take to the skies to defend you from serious hardware and software problems. Tally-ho!!

YOUR HELPLINE FOR TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

ICONOGRAPHY



VIDEO
For those video blues, both hard and soft.



SOUND
What do you call a deer with no ears? No ear-deer, oh well... at least you can rest assured that our sound hardware and software tips are better than our jokes.



HARDWARE
Chips, graphics cards, motherboards, and general hardware trouble may have your supplier confused, but not us!



COMMS
Broken down on the information super highway? Don't worry, just ask us – PC Review the 5th Emergency Service.



MS-DOS
For getting MS-DOS to work, or overcoming driver problems and compatibility errors, here's where you should look.



WINDOWS
For all your Windows 3 and Windows 95 problems look no further.



APPLICATIONS/ SOFTWARE
From PaintBrush to Office 95 we'll get you back up and running, alive and well.



PROGRAMMING
We can't help you program the video recorder unfortunately, but we can solve your Basic, C, Pascal and Assembler problems.

Start Me Up



▲ *Andy's looks belie his PC Machismo!*



▲ *Pool-hall Pat is always on target!*

This month we seem to have received an awful lot of game-related enquiries. There can't be many of you out there who've never experienced the nightmare of hardware and software compatibility, but hopefully our Q&A will either solve your problem or at least point you in the right direction so you can sort it out for yourself. Thankfully, Windows 95 will soon mean an end to many gamers troubles – but in the meantime PC Review's technical team of Andy and Pat are on hand and ready to help. To this end we've now extended the ways in which you can send your Q&A problems to us.

Firstly, you can write to us, of course, at the usual PC Review address which is shown at the end of this section.

Or, if you are so inclined, you may now fax or e-mail us direct. To e-mail us send an e-mail with a subject header of Q&A Problem to pcreview@cix.compulink.co.uk – sorry to be so precise, but any other subject header will not find its way to the Q&A department. Or fax us on (0171) 972 6701, again clearly marking it Q&A Problem.

Whichever way you contact us, please make sure that in the body of the communication you give us as much detail as possible about all the hardware you are using: make, model, RAM size, graphics card etc. It also helps if you tell us the software being used, Windows and DOS versions etc. Sadly, we can't personally respond to your problems, or answer telephone enquiries – we'd never get time to write the magazine then! But we will look into almost any technical problem you may have. So, what are you waiting for, time to get writing, faxing and e-mailing...

Hardware

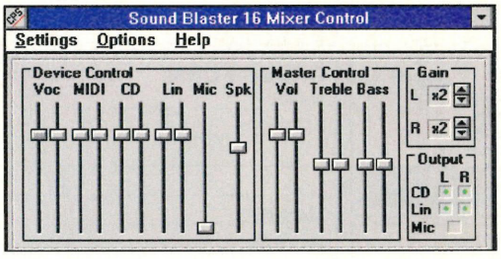
If your hard disk is giving you a hard time, or your floppy's gone stroppy, we're here to help...

Cache-flow problems

I recently bought a P100 multimedia PC with a quad-speed CD-ROM drive, SoundBlaster 16 and 1Gb hard drive. I also bought several games, all of which ran without problems. Shortly afterwards, I was provided with a new P75 PC at my office. To my dismay it runs much faster than my machine at home. A friend suggested that it could be the graphics card, but when I checked my Windows 95 hardware list, I found that both machines have the same ATI mach64 card. What could be wrong with my P100? Please help me because I am becoming increasingly tempted to swap the two computers when no-one is looking!

Simon Hill
Slough

A While the people in the plumbing trade maintain that 'It's not the parts, it's the labour that costs 'ain't it' in the cut-throat world of PC dealerships, the opposite is true. We're afraid it would appear you may be a victim of an increasing trend by many computer dealers to create temptingly cheap machines by cutting back on the more expensive internal components. Primarily, the

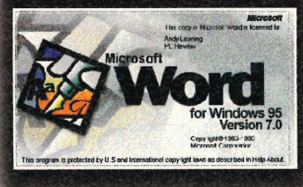


Reader Recommends

John Kennedy [not our John Kennedy surely? - Ed] has come up with something that is not so much a tip but really rather more of a dire warning to readers of a bug in Windows 95 which could cause you apoplexy if you use Word 7.

If you work in Windows 95 and use Word 7 don't use the Word Pad utility supplied with Windows to convert ASCII format text files to Word for Windows format. Doing so will delete words from the file and also mess up line endings. If you need to get text files into Microsoft Word use the Open command and change the file type in the dialog box.

Many thanks for that John — especially on behalf of all Word 7 users out there!



Software

Are your programs sending you rude messages? That sounds like the type of thing we want to know about...

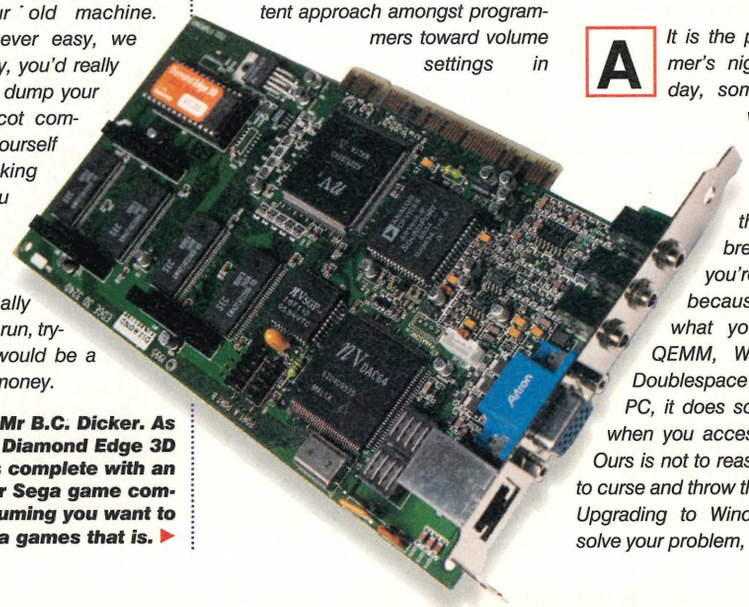
target is external cache memory, which is memory with a very fast access time, used as a temporary data store by the CPU. It is extremely expensive, but affords massive speed improvements, markedly increasing the performance of your machine. Look in the BIOS settings of your two machines. We bet our grandmothers that the P75 has more cache memory (sorry, gran). Our own P100 has 256K cache and runs like a dream. There's a lesson in this kids: when you see that bargain new PC, demand to know how much external cache memory it has!

Motherboard Mayhem

I am confused about what motherboard I could fit (if possible) into my Apricot xen-s 386SX 16Mhz. I recently found out that my computer would not take a Cyrix chip as my CPU was welded to the board! I want to do up this heap of rubbish and turn it into a games machine. Please could you tell me what motherboard would be suitable for my requirements, and still fit into my case.

Peter Thompson
Rugby

A *You know, Peter, there comes a time in every man's life where he has to take a deep breath and admit to himself that, well, it's time to let that old PC go to the place where all good computers go to die. Older brand named machines are notoriously non-standard, with welded chips, video cards built into the motherboard, oddly shaped cases, weird BIOSs... you name it. If you upgrade your motherboard to something sufficient for most games, you'll also need to buy more memory, a bigger hard drive, a new graphics card, an SVGA monitor, a decent sound card and a CD-ROM drive. Assuming all this fits in your case (and we think there's probably more chance of Cindy Crawford offering us a back rub!), the case will be the only original part of your old machine. Breaking up is never easy, we know, but ultimately, you'd really be best advised to dump your long-suffering Apricot completely, and treat yourself to a brand-spanking new machine. You may be loath to part with it because of how much you originally paid but in the long run, trying to upgrade it would be a waste of time and money.*



Look and weep Mr B.C. Dicker. As 3D cards go The Diamond Edge 3D board comes complete with an nVidia chip for Sega game compatibility. Assuming you want to play Sega games that is. ►

Pinball nightmares

I am having problems with Psycho Pinball (CD-ROM version). While the game plays well, the problem lies with the sound. In fact, I get far too much sound! It is so terribly loud and distorted that I have to do without it. I have tried readjusting my SoundBlaster 16 volume levels via the SB16 mixerset, but the game just pushes all the levels right to the maximum settings. I have no problems with sound with any other game, so can only therefore assume it is Codemasters' software which is at fault. How do I fix it and why is it happening at all?

Also, will Windows 95 cope with my multiple config set-up? The reason I ask is because I have one set-up where I use EMS for certain games. Finally, upgrading video. With all the different types currently available, and with all the new 3D cards now visible on the horizon, which would be the best for me to get?

B.C. Dicker
Andover

A *At times like these we get all nostalgic for those day of yore, when men were men, and sound cards had wee volume knobs on the back. We too have a SoundBlaster 16, and an excellent card it is at that, but many is the time we've had our eardrums perforated and watched in abject horror as our vibrating speakers shook the house down. The bad news is, there is simply nothing you can do. There seems to be no consistent approach amongst programmers toward volume settings in their games. While most use the default settings for cards like the SB16, others set them to odd levels for no apparent reason. Let us not forget, these people are geniuses and we must forgive them their little foibles.*

Windows 95 can handle multiple configurations. When you install it, it will grab your current system files and modify them only slightly, so you'll still get the start-up menu with all your lovely options.

As for 3D graphics cards, check out the cover feature in the February '96 edition of PC Review before you make any firm decisions. Back in our December issue we reviewed other graphics cards and found the Diamond Stealth to be the best all round graphics card.

Memory mismanagement

I recently purchased a 486DX PC from a friend of mine. I have two hard drives crammed full of software, and have scarcely been able to tear myself away from my new toy! I have one problem, however. My machine has QEMM v7 installed, and I find that it gives me the largest free executable program size in DOS, but when I run Windows 3.11 and try to access the 3.5" floppy drive, the machine crashes. If I reboot and use EMM386 instead, the drive works without error in Windows. I enclose my system files. Is there anything wrong with them? Also if I upgrade to Windows 95 in the near future. Will this solve the problem?

Mike Durie
Harlow

A *It is the proverbial programmer's nightmare that some day, some how, someone will come along, use their program in a situation they had simply never thought of, and break it. Well we hope you're satisfied Mr Durie, because that's exactly what you've done! When QEMM, Windows 3.11 and Doublespace are all running on a PC, it does sometimes crash out when you access the floppy drive. Ours is not to reason why, ours is but to curse and throw things at the monitor. Upgrading to Windows 95 may well solve your problem, but you will find that your current version of QEMM will not free up as much memory as the Windows 95 EMM386 and Memmaker. We suggest you upgrade your QEMM too, with the new Windows 95 version.*

Reader Recommends

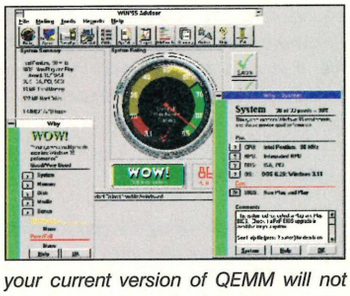
Your DTP feature in the Feb issue was very helpful, particularly the tips. I've been using Serif's PagePlus 3.0 for a little while now and was at first surprised by some of its limitations. However, having experimented with the program I've come up with a couple of ways around some of its more annoying handicaps.

If you've got a frame of text you won't be able to rotate it, but you can if you click on the 'Tools/Convert to Picture' menu option. This changes the text to a picture that you can then rotate. (Remember that you won't be able to edit the text again afterwards — Andy).

If you don't have a drawing program but want to add a little variation to the supplied clipart you can change colours in the pictures using the Colour Mapper and then save the pictures out under a new name. You'll need to use the Export Picture to save them.

James Goldsmith
Epson

Thanks for those timely and useful tips James, anyone else got any others — how about some DesignWorks or Matisse Light tricks? Over to you...



It's a DOS

On my Mesh P133 PC I'm trying to setup a series of batch files that I can run from Windows 95 to do things like backup data from one drive to another, delete un-needed files and the like. The problem is that whenever I run them Windows 95 leaves the DOS Window open — cluttering up my display. Can you suggest any way to close them automatically, I'd be very grateful.

Greg Howe
Swindon

Continued over ►

No sooner asked than answered Greg. It's actually easy to automatically close DOS windows in '95, but as it took us a little while to figure out ourselves we won't scoff. Over to you Andy. Create the DOS batch file as normal, but now create a shortcut to it. Having done that click on the shortcut icon and click on the Program Tab in the dialog box — then it's just a case of selecting the Close DOS Window on Exit and hey presto your Windows will shut. Simple!



Silent movies

HELP! I bought the Sierra game "Police Quest 3" and seem to have a little problem with the game. When I try to start I get a message which says: "Unable to identify music hardware". I have a SoundBlaster Pro 2 which has the default settings (Port 220, IRQ 5, DMA 1). I get the same message with Leisure Suit Larry 5. What can be wrong?

Andreas Lorentsen
Norway

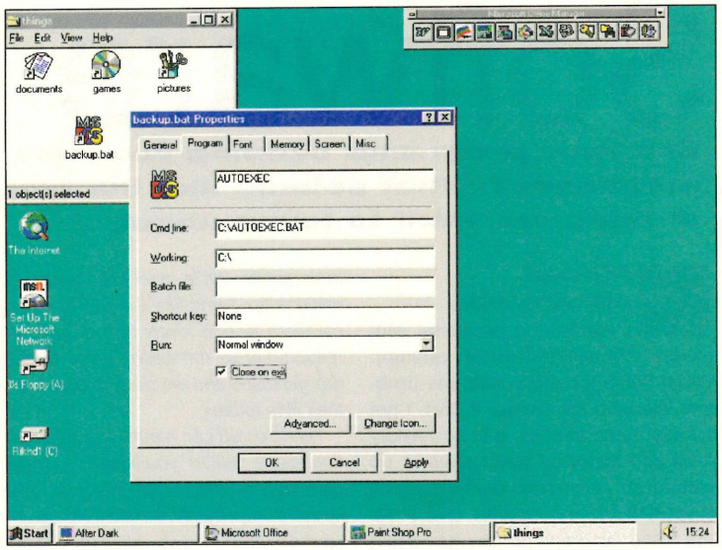
Here at the PC Review offices, we understand your frustration. Playing Leisure Suit Larry 5 without the music must be like watching Saturday Night Fever with the sound turned down (something some of us would consider a blessing). We can only guess the root of your problem, however, because you did not send us your system files. We do know that some older games require the SoundBlaster environment variables to be set before they can initialise the sound hardware. Check you have the following lines in your AUTOEXEC.BAT file. If you do not, then add them, and you should find your music returns, as if by magic.

```
SET SOUND=C:\SB
```

{or whichever directory you installed your SoundBlaster files into}

```
SET BLASTER=A220 I5 D1
```

If you are still having problems, send us your configuration files and we'll investigate the problem in more detail.



Windows '95 tends to leave the DOS window open when Greg Howe runs batch files to back up files. Here's how he can get Windows to automatically close the window on exit and save him from cluttering up his otherwise beautiful display.



Painful recovery

Recently my hard drive went into a spectacular meltdown. This caused every file to be turned into garbage. So I formatted the drive and replaced the files using the handy backup CD provided with my system. Since then, my computer has been doing strange things:

- **All sound from Windows disappeared completely, even though the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT both contain sound commands.**
- **Even more strange, all of my icons in Windows have been turned into MS-DOS folder icons and for no apparent reason.**
- **My "Full Throttle" demo detected my sound card at 220,5,1 but at the same settings I cannot get sound from Day of the Tentacle or Discworld. I just get the first word of each line of spoken text.**
- **My speakers emit a constant droning sound which is very annoying and can't be doing my speakers the greatest amount of good.**

Can you help?

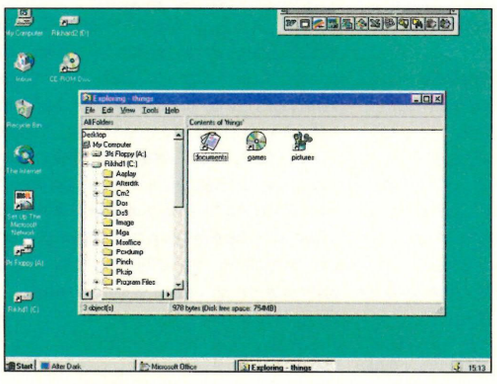
Richard Greenwood
Alderley Edge

Touched by your loss, we had a bit of a whip round at the PC Review office and decided to buy a wreath for your hard drive — unfortunately, in these days of ethical investment and Cyberbanking, you simply can't get much for 37 pence... Perhaps if I can help fix a few problems I won't feel so bad. If your sound has gone from Windows, I think it is quite likely you have not loaded the Windows sound driver for your card. Load the Drivers program from your Windows control panel, and check you have the SoundBlaster Pro 2 driver listed. If not, click the Add button, select it from the list, and follow the instructions on screen.

Your icons have changed because Windows does not know where to find the programs the icons point at. If you single click on an icon and select Properties from the Program Manager File menu, you can use the Change Icon button to set it back the way it was.

As for your sound card, we think Full Throttle may well have detected your settings incorrectly. Normally the odd effect of only hearing the first part of digital sound (like the first spoken word) happens when the game is using the wrong IRQ setting for your card. Try using the card's diagnostic software to find out the IRQ setting for your card, and use whichever value it tells you.

The annoying droning sound could be due to one of two things. Either the FM sound has been set up incorrectly, or you have a large wasp trapped inside the speaker casing. Check that your FM settings are correct (SoundBlasters default to port 330H), and if the problem persists, take your sound card back to the supplier and get them to check it is working correctly. If everything appears to be in order, and the droning persists, try calling Rentokil.



Our reader suggestion for customising your icons for folders in Windows '95 is a great 'trick' that uses short cuts to a great effect. Well done to Alan Farmhouse of Sidcup who will receive the requisite PC Review kudos and a Microsoft joystick.



Flight delayed

I have a 486DX2 with a CD-ROM and 8Mb RAM. I have recently bought the game "Flight Unlimited" on CD-ROM. On the game's box it says I need 8Mb RAM, but when I installed it, as it said in the manual, and ran it, a message appeared saying I needed 1,433,412 bytes of memory more. I tried to run it on extended and expanded memory, but there was still no change. Do you have any tips on how I could get my game working? Please help!

Peter Williams
Bristol

Undeterred by the fact that you didn't send us your system files (and OH how we love system files), we are going to take a wild stab in the dark and say we think you problem is EMS. The game requires 8Mb of XMS memory, and I think it's likely that you are allocating just over 1Mb of that valuable resource to EMS. Check your CONFIG.SYS file to see if the line that loads EMM386 has the NOEMS flag set. If it doesn't, therein lies your problem. Add the word NOEMS to the line and remove the word RAM if it is present. This disables EMS support and frees up the maximum amount of XMS. We hope this solves your problem.

Reader Recommends

I looked forward to Windows 95 with great anticipation. But on installing it I discovered to my disappointment that there was no way to have personalised icons for folders. I had this facility in Windows 3 — albeit with a shareware utility, but this utility doesn't work under Win 95.

After much experimentation however I've found a way of doing it and getting my desired individual folder icons. Create a folder in the Windows directory, call it something like 'folders'. Now put the folders that you want to have new icons for in it. Now put shortcuts to these folders wherever you need them. Finally, call up the Properties dialog for each shortcut and click on the Change Icon button to add your own pictures. Hey presto! — customised folder icons.

Alan Farmhouse
Sidcup, Kent

PC REVIEW READERS TOP TIP

An interesting bit of lateral thinking you have there Alan, and one worthy of a large bucket of kudos. Unfortunately we're all out of kudos for now, have a Microsoft Sidewinder joystick instead.

Peripherals

Whether it's Plug'n'Play or Plug'n'Pray, the PC Review technical chaps have the answers...

Waste Overflow

One of the things I was really looking forward to in Windows 95 was the trashcan - at last being able to drag files to a waste bin but still be able to drag them out later — wonderful! Then I installed it and all was fine for the first month — until now. Last night I dragged a couple of files to the bin, this morning I went to retrieve a couple of files from the bin and they weren't there. Has my trashcan developed a hole in its bottom, is my hard drive corrupt, can I get the files back? Please help, I'm really getting desperate for the files.

Paul Knowles
London

A I don't really know how to tell you this Paul, but your documents have gone forever. They've joined the great pulping mill in the sky. If it's any consolation it wasn't your fault, but rather a rather nasty feature in Windows 95. When you drag files to the bin they aren't deleted but rather moved to a temporary storage area on your hard drive, it's only when you empty the bin that they're really deleted. This temporary area can only hold a finite number of files and if it gets filled to capacity then it will make sure that the first files put into it are deleted to make space for new documents. The problem is that Windows '95 just doesn't bother to tell you when it's almost full resulting in you losing files without warning once the bin is full. If you really need them you can always try running Norton Utilities which can, in some cases, recover accidentally erased files — but if you've written anything to the hard drive since then you will find that your chances of recovering anything worthwhile, or even vaguely recognisable, are very slim indeed.

Reader Recommends

Fancy cutting those huge, multiple cups of tea, software installation times? Paul Donald from Ontario, Canada has come up with a neat trick that can shave a few minutes off floppy disk installation times. Over to you Paul...

While at Comdex recently I was watching a software demonstration when the PC being used crashed and the application had to be re-installed. Instead of running the setup routine as normal the demonstrator first copied all the floppy disks to the hard drive, each disk in its own directory. Then he ran the setup program as normal, but each time the program asked him to 'Insert Disk 2' or other disks, he simply typed in the path of the directory where he'd previously copied the offending disk. The computer then read the files off the hard drive, which was quicker than loading from floppy. When I went home I tried it out on several programs I'd bought during the show and sure enough it worked, saving several minutes each time.

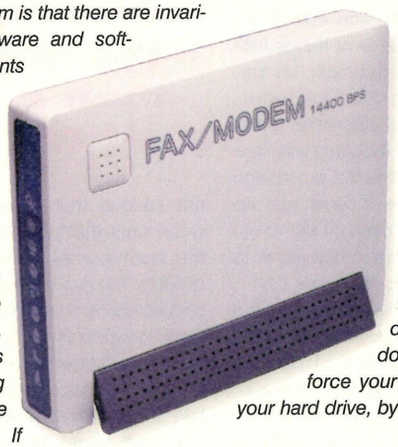
This trick will work with any install program that allows you to tell it where to find the files — most now do. The only thing to remember is to delete the directories from your hard drive afterwards. It's also worth noting that if you're installing a big program with lots of floppies (like Office 95 with 20 odd disks) you will of course need lots of hard drive space, but as long as you have the space you can save yourself time.

Mysterious modems

I used to have an old Apricot XEN I AWS PC which used to be part of a network. Before sending the Apricot to the tip, I removed what has been confirmed to be an internal modem. I haven't got a clue what make or model it is or how to connect it. It will fit into either of two ports in my PC, but I cannot make the computer recognise it. Please tell me what I need to get it connected and working, if indeed it will even run on my machine.

A. Bartlett
Coventry

A The problem with fitting obscure peripherals to your system is that there are invariably both hardware and software components that need to be installed. What you are lacking are the software drivers for your modem. Unfortunately, since you do not know the make or model, and given its age, obtaining these may be quite difficult. If you take your card to a local PC supplier, they may be able to tell you the manufacturer's name, and you will then need to get in touch with them, so that they can send you the necessary software. Once your machine is set up, you can plug the modem into a phone socket and use one of the many terminal software (the Windows terminal, for example) to dial other computers anywhere in the world.



Putting the boot in

I am having trouble making a boot disk for any CD games, because the computer fails to recognise my CD driver whenever it is installed from floppy disk. The offending line, which an error is reported in, is

```
DEVICEHIGH   /L:1,38208   =
\DEV\SLCD.SYS     /D:SONY_000
/B:340 /M:P /V /C
```

This cannot be due to simple typing errors, because an error is reported even if the CONFIG.SYS is copied directly from my hard disk to a floppy. I can get the programs to run by pressing F8 during boot up and omitting unnecessary commands, but it would make life much easier if I could make boot disks as I do for programs that do not require the CD drive.

A.R.Schmit
S. Glamorgan

A It's really quite tempting to sit back, grin in a rather smug way, pour myself a half of Dr Dos' Olde Keyboard Kruncher and make some sort of sarcastic comment here, but that would be a bit hypocritical. I have to say that because everyone here has, at some point or other, made the same basic mistake as you. The reason that your computer cannot find your CD driver is because it is looking for the SLCD.SYS driver on the A: drive when you are booting from floppy instead of looking for it correctly on the C: drive. All you need to do to fix the problem is force your machine to look on your hard drive, by changing the line to

```
DEVICEHIGH   /L:1,38208   =
C:\DEV\SLCD.SYS   /D:SONY_000
/B:340 /M:P /V /C
```

And there you have it. Not a difficult one to fix but ohh sooo annoying if you don't quite know how to fix it using the above simple change.

Just send your PC problems to Q&A, PC Review, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London. EC1R 3AU.

E Mail: PCREVIEW@CIX.COMPULINK.CO.UK.

Flashback

It's often easy to forget how far technology has progressed, and how powerful today's software and hardware is by comparison. PC Review was the first home leisure PC magazine — launched over five years ago now — so here for your delectation is the low-down on the world of PC computing in November 1991 seen through the pages of our very first issue!

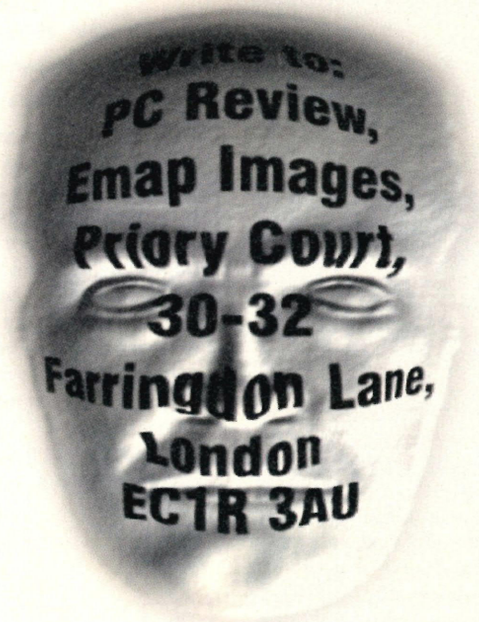


A GoldStar GS425 486dx 25 with a 210Mb hard drive would have set you back £3499 — compare this to the Thrust PC reviewed in this issue. Hard drives, although popular were still prohibitively expensive, and on the main part were very small. A Conner 21Mb IDE model could be yours for just £179 for example, at the time of writing £179 will now get a 1.08 Gigabyte EIDE Quantum Fireball drive!

As for graphics, EGA was still the main format for most games (16 colours at a screen resolution of 640x350) although VGA was becoming more popular. Today, 256 colour cards with resolutions of 1024x768 and video support now common, and true 3D accelerator cards are already appearing!

Next month, another time and another PC comes under the spotlight.

Fan mail, Hate mail, E-mail



Proving without doubt that the pen is indeed mightier than a swiss army knife is PCR's own letters pages.

Worms!

Let me start by saying that your cover design for the January 1996 issue was the best magazine cover I have ever seen. I must confess though, that I am not a regular reader. But I have bought previous editions of your magazine in the past and expect this to soon be a regular occurence.

Now I shall tell you my tale of what I consider to be a kick in the teeth. About four years ago I entered a competition in another, lesser magazine. The competition was to design a new computer game character. As I am a competent artist I thought this might be a competition I could win; so along with a few friends I set about roughing out ideas for my supreme character. Eventually I settled on the idea of a worm, and once this was confirmed by my envious buddies I got straight to work and within an hour had conceived what I believed to be a great idea. This worm had everything: power-ups, a guitar to twot things with and a pair of shades to match. He was green and I called him the Funky worm.

After four hours of relentless scribbling it was finished. I thought I was sure to win. There also came the promise to return all entries and I could see no other information, so even if I didn't win at least I could use my funky worm to explore other avenues of design.

However, when I rushed to get the next issue of this magazine and subsequently look for the results I couldn't believe my eyes, not even a runner-up.

Weeks passed and there was still no sign of my worm. Gradually I stopped hoping and it wasn't until a month or so ago when a friend (Hi Paul!) purchased Worms the PC game, that it got me thinking. Earthworm Jim 1 & 2, Worms ...Could it be that my Funky worm has been salvaged by the respective companies and immortalised as an imposter along with someone's crow in EWJ? Now I know that there is only two individual games to base my wild accusations on but still, I am mildly annoyed, if not curious that I haven't seen my worm since that fateful competition and that worm games have become a sort of a fad. You can bet that there will be a sequel to worms and if a guitar appears anywhere near them, someone's going to be hearing from me. I am not saying though that pixel-jacking is present, just to whoever submits work that they hope will boost them in a particular feild, beware of scouts hoping to make a fast buck without paying for the idea and patenting it themselves.

Anyway aside from this sob story, congratulations on producing a great magazine which is informative, entertaining to read and contains great quality material, both content and appearance are excellent. All the best for this year and beyond.

Tim Powell
Frinton-on-Sea, Essex.

So, the worms have turned! I can understand your grievance, but I do think you are letting your imagination get the better of you. Worms and Earthworm Jim are produced by completely separate organisations and unconnected, and neither company has any relationship with any of the magazine publishers. Isn't it just possible the judges of the competition didn't think as much of your entry as you did and that it got lost in the post? Having said all of this, ownership of game ideas and images is a very delicate but important point hence the copyright laws, if you feel you really have been 'done' why not discuss it with a solicitor.

▼ ***The worm's your oyster, Tim(?)...***



Slipped Again

I don't normally make a point of writing to PC magazines to vent my anger, but this time I've been pushed too far. You may remember reviewing a certain game way back in Issue 16 (January 1993) that changed the face of fast games involving fast cars. What was it? It was Formula 1 Grand Prix! Very good it was too. Now, some three years later, Geoff Crammond finishes the follow up F1GP2. You may remember previewing it in your September issue, when it was due for release in October.

Well, it's now nearly the beginning of December. Oh, how the time flies! F1GP2 should be in the shops now. Except it ISN'T. Microprose had said it was coming out in October. No, it was early November. Sorry! Wrong again, now it's mid December.

Wondering just what the hell was going, I contacted Microprose to ask them just when we could expect to see this fast paced, texture mapped delight. I now think it is coming out early this year (!!) (according to Microprose). So, having sent off for it mail order, the mail order company told me at the beginning of November that the game was due for release on the 24th of that month and I waited. I am very disappointed about all of this, as I have sat for two years waiting for this and now it's not here.

It's not just F1GP2 of course. Remember The Dig? Oh yeah, that was coming out two years ago too. Two years later it arrives. There are others too, but I won't go into them.

Anyway, F1GP2 isn't here and who knows what the final release date will really be. Software houses should set a realistic release date, not alter it to suit. Yes, the game has to be perfect (I've played F1GP for two and a half years and it has never crashed or anything), but it's just not on people setting release dates and then putting them back every month. Grand Prix manager is, according to Microprose coming soon. So, I would expect to see that in November... December... say January. That seems about right. What do you know about F1GP2 that I don't? Also, is it true that the VGA mode in the game (F1GP2) has been scrapped and it is now SVGA only? (PC Sports says it is.) Oh, and one more thing... is there likely to be a demo of some sort regarding F1GP2 on the cover CD? Or will I have to wait for the July issue?

Stephen Leathem
Crowborough, East Sussex.

Slippage, as it's termed, is one of the bug bears of the computer industry. Everyone gets hacked off when a game they're waiting for doesn't come out on time, particularly if you're supposed to be reviewing it! However it's rarely intentional, but instead a side effect of programmmers wanting to get the very best out of PC hardware or take advantage of newly introduced technology. However, we do agree it's about time something was done about it. If other readers feel the same way as Stephen does why not drop us a line, if we get enough letters we'll take them to the most frequent offenders and urge them to clean up their act.

★ STAR LETTER ★

3D or not 3D

Though Adam Peters, in his short piece '3D Cards: The Case Against' made some valuable points, I think that it should be noted that "simple, all-action, graphics-uber-alles arcade games" are not the only ones possessed of graphics that make heavy demands on the CPU. Take the example of the sequel to TFX, DID's TFX: EF2000. Although a great deal of CPU time is given over to controlling the electronic battlefield, anyone who saw the screenshots in Pat Fox's review is Issue 49 (November '95) can see that an equal amount of processor time is taken up by the graphics.

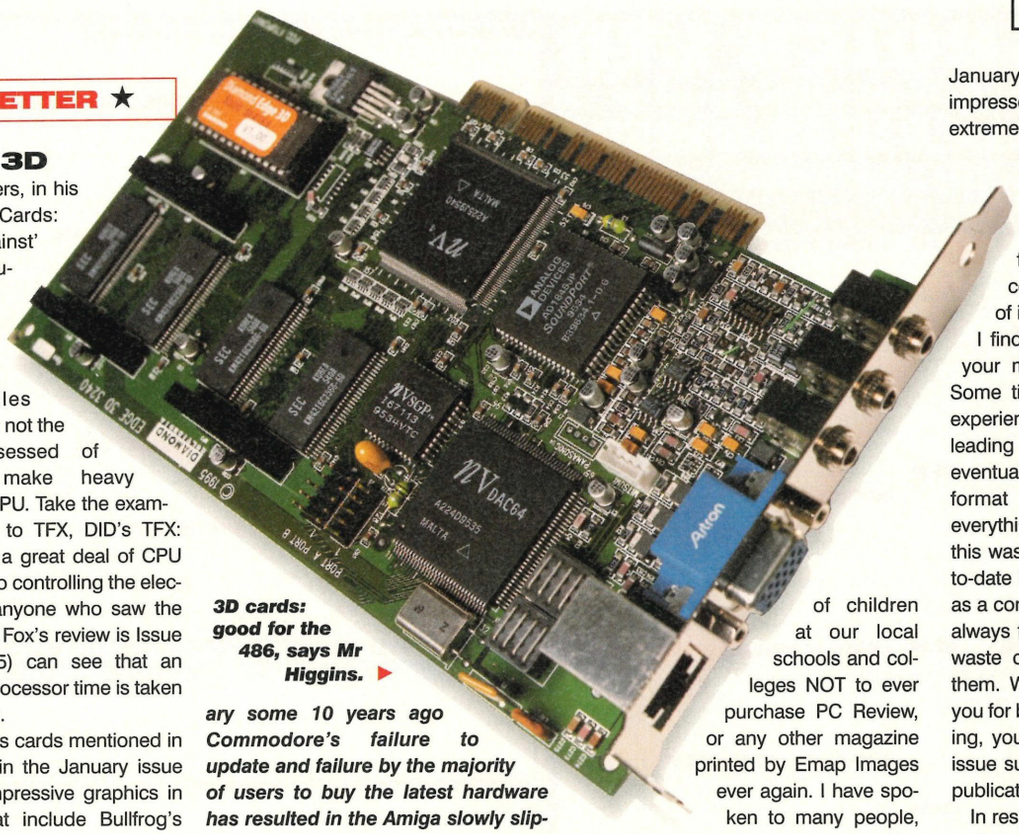
If the 3D graphics cards mentioned in the cover feature in the January issue can handle the impressive graphics in these games, that include Bullfrog's Magic Carpet series, which few of a right mind would claim to be "simple, all action, graphics-uber-alles arcade games" then many more people can play games like EF2000. These cards, if properly designed, might just be able to breathe life into old 486 machines, saving owners of these machines, myself included, the seemingly insurmountable cost of either upgrading or buying a completely new machine, as is more often the case.

And users of these machines will not be the only ones (along with, of course, the manufacturers of such cards) to benefit from the cards. Software houses, such as the aforementioned Bullfrog, will also benefit from a swell in the markets for their games. Certainly, David Kaemmer of Papyrus appears to agree.

With regard to the concerns Mr Peters raised with respect to the future-proofing of these cards, is not already the case that the PC industry as a whole is progressing along faster than the bank balances of most of its customers? No sooner has the Pentium settled into the mainstream than Intel already has plans not simply to develop, but to release the next generation of chips, The Pentium Pro. In any case, updating to new cards is certainly cheaper than updating an entire new system, is it not?

Stephen J Higgins
County Cork, Ireland

No one likes forking out for new hardware (roughly every eighteen months) but by the same token it's precisely this constant inovation and renewal that has bought the PC to its current position as the market lead in practically every sector of computing. Take a look at the Amiga, while revolutionary some 10 years ago Commodore's failure to update and failure by the majority of users to buy the latest hardware has resulted in the Amiga slowly slipping behind other systems until it finally died last year. Besides, you're taking a negative view point. Don't look at it as having to pay more money again, but rather a chance to get the very latest in computing power and entertainment. If you don't update your PC now, you'll only end up having to spend more in the long run buying an entirely new system, PC or otherwise.



3D cards: good for the 486, says Mr Higgins.

Discredited

I've seen other PC magazines recently who have also reviewed Phantasmagoria. They did not think it necessary to print such graphical pictures of how the wife could be killed, i.e. a funnel in her mouth. Teenagers are thought to be adult, they are however very influenced at their age. What about them?

I totally agree with Mrs Gavin's letter which you printed in your January 1996 issue. I do not think she is discredited by her letter. She was only making it heartily felt what I and many other people in this country felt. I am backing Mrs Gavin's views.

She is not the one who is slighted, your magazine is by your comments to her letter. That is not very professional. It does not do you much credit. You were very discourteous, which just sums up your attitude and views.

I will be recommending to all my family, friends, work colleagues and parents of children at our local schools and colleges NOT to ever purchase PC Review, or any other magazine printed by Emap Images ever again. I have spoken to many people, who all agree, a printed apology to Mrs T Gavin is required.

Mrs C Palmer
Alton, Hampshire

Sorry to disagree with you as well, but if you'd carefully read our reply we didn't slight Mrs Gavin at all. Mrs Gavin stated, and I quote from her letter, "What kind of psycho wrote this review?" — she was the one being discourteous. In our reply we clearly stated that it was this reference that, in our opinion, lowered the overall tone of her letter, not her letter which we printed and answered in full without resource to attacks upon her character. As to the game review itself, if we hadn't printed the pictures or reviewed the game and Mrs Gavin's child had purchased it would we then have been at fault for not pointing out its content? As it was we reviewed it giving our professional judgement on the title and included the pictures to show its content, which in this case obviously convinced her it was not suitable, and so the review fullfilled its job.

Please feel free to send in correspondence to us via the Internet on pcreview@cix.compulink.co.uk or through the conventional postal system to: PC Review Letters, EMAP IMAGES, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON, EC1R 3AU. We value your opinions so much that we're now giving away a stonking Europress software prize for the letter of the month so remember to send in details of your system just in case you're a winner.

Rediscovered

I have recently "re-discovered" your excellent mag. after an abscence of some two years. I have since then been in the wilderness subscribing to one of your competitors (.Having read your January 1996 edition, I was very impressed with the overall content and extremely goodbreadth of coverage, i.e. games, reference CDs and hardware. Although I am primarily interested in the latest games it is refreshing to find a "games" magazine which covers other subjects that are as of interest to gamers.

I find that, for me, the best part of your mag is the "No Disk" edition. Some time ago I had an unfortunate experience with a free coverdisk on a leading PC games magazine, which eventually led to me having to totally reformat my hard disk and re-install everything from scratch. (Incidentally this was a good lesson in keeping up-to-date backups; I hadn't and suffered as a consequence!). Therefore, I have always felt that the cover disks were a waste of money as I refused to use them. Which is why I must complement you for being, I think I am correct in saying, you are the only PC magazine to issue such a "No Disk" edition of their publication.

In response to Mr Golby's comments in the January edition, I agree wholeheartedly with his comments. I also run a 486DX2 machine and would find it very helpful if your reviewers good give an indication, or separate mark, for how a particular game runs on the lower spec. machines. So when your review of Madden '96 NFL comes out in February, I am interested in how it runs on a Pentium, but it would be of more use to me if your reviewer could tell me how it runs on the minimum spec. machine as well. I trust that you WILL be reviewing Madden '96, please, please!

Keep up the good work, I'm now hooked on PC Review.

Stewart Samson
e-mail:stewart@stoob.demon.co.uk

Thanks Stewart. Glad you like the no disk edition, what do other readers think of the idea?

Your prize

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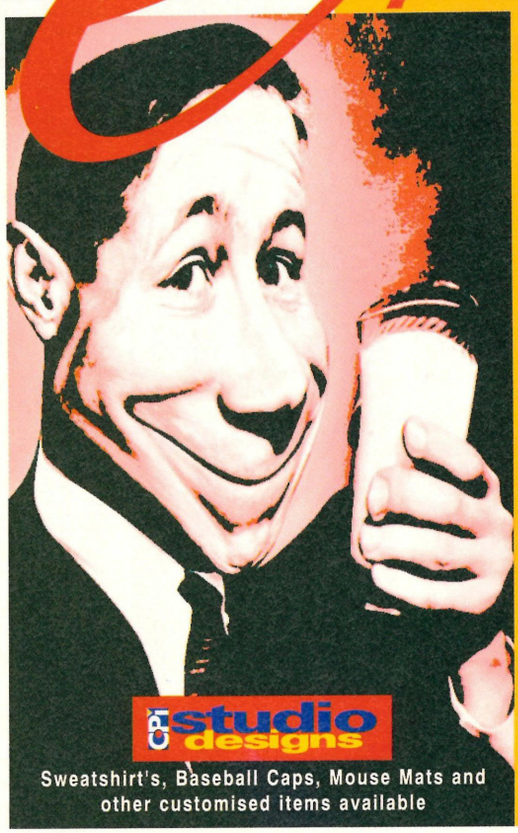
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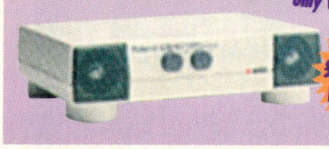
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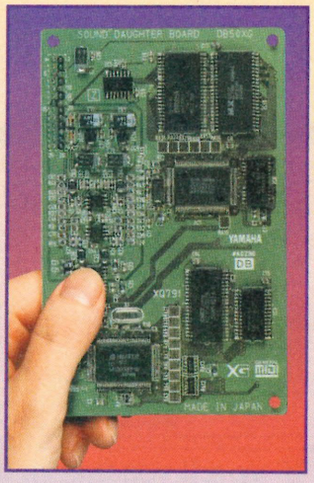
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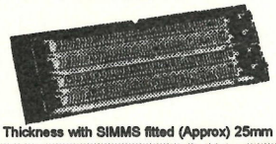
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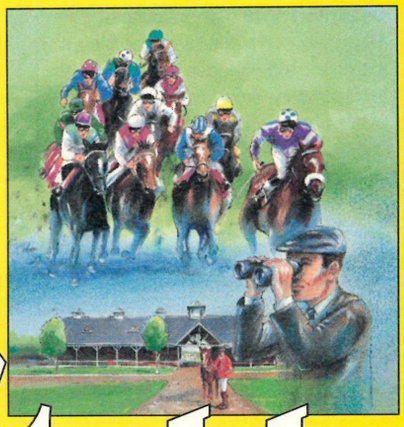
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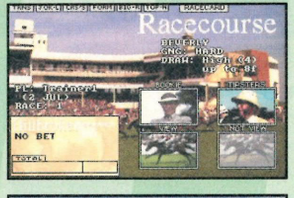


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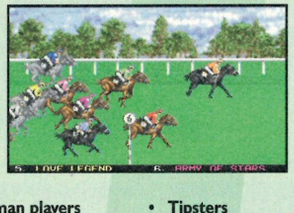
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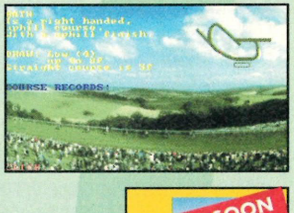
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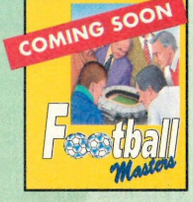






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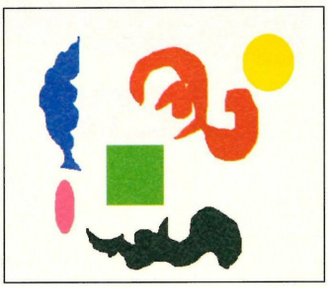
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The World Of Crapart

For the office challenge this month there's a slight deviation away from the games forum. Instead the staff had to use their artistic talents to amusing effect. Er, yes.

Each member of the staff had to draw a piece of computer art (to coincide with our graphics theme this month). This artwork was then taken to a local Psychotherapist who, without knowing any of the participants, was asked to judge what type of person each piece represented. Some of the results were spookily accurate...

Cal Jones — Reviews Editor



"Whoever did this piece could either be a very methodical person, who cares how they are perceived. Or they really don't care much for group activities. I'd choose the former though, and say that this person keeps a very organised mind."
Job on staff (according to Psychotherapist): "Administration or filing work."

Mike Newson — Designer



"Cluttered and busy. He likes to take immense time in creating things just to impress, yet overcomplicates matters. Will spend considerable amounts of hours just trying to produce something that others will see as inspirational, though is yet to make an impact."
Job on staff: "Artist who would most like to be a writer."

Andy Leaning — Technical Editor



"Is the person in the picture the person who created it? They are, so that makes it very easy. This person is egocentric, or at least they want to be the centre of all attention and are probably not at present. He would like to perceive himself as the Sun, but inside knows he may never be."
Job on staff: "Journalist with a small amount of responsibility."

Pat Fox — Staff Writer



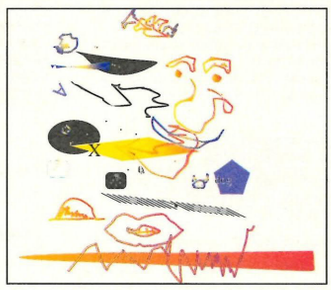
"Doesn't know what they want to be. The colours suggest a warm, friendly person, yet the text itself suggests someone who likes to shun any form of regularity. Has aspirations that are so great that this person will adapt to any task just to get ahead. Is this person male or female? I think that they're definitely a girl."
Job on staff: "Middle Management."

Jo Woodford — Art Editor



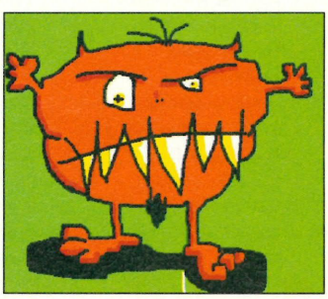
"Calm. This person knows where everything is, including her own thoughts. Remains unflustered no matter what, and likes to keep everything, even the creation of artwork, as simple as possible. There's no clutter here. Also, is this person a Pisces? No? There goes my fish theory."
Job on staff: "Has risen far in the world of art."

Steve James — Managing Editor



"Scruffy. Has a feminine side. But as you look more at the picture you realise that everything was thought out, just not put in its right place. The free-flowing sweeps in the drawing suggests that this person has no time for trivialities. But at the end of the day, he's happy in his current job."
Job on staff: "Staff Writer who keeps himself to himself."

Rik Henderson — Associate Editor



"A complete joker. Likes to keep his mind on the most trivial of matters, and will take much time and effort in the creation of what seems quite flippant. Unfortunately, his mischievous personality gets in the way of what organisational tasks he has to perform."
Job on staff: "Writer/journalist - probably the creator of this experiment."

IN CONCLUSION

So that's it! At the end of the day you can draw your own conclusions on the staff of the magazine. What we found was that, like Astrology for instance, some aspects of personality can be drawn from any of the statements, and when you read them long enough you can start to see more and more parts of each person in the descriptions. The psychotherapist did find it hard to adjudge whether people had taken this little, fun experiment seriously, and admitted that psychoanalysis was a tad difficult just from PC-created art, and so would like to see each member individually for a far more delving probe into their minds, although he may not actually like what he finds. Yep, they're all loonies when it comes down to it.

Yep, it's time (again) for...

That's it, the deadline for entries into the Worm Fantasy League has now passed, and before we actually let the tournament begin it's competitor list time. Please note though, that on the date of compilation there was still around a week left for entries, so if your name and team isn't listed here we just hadn't received it yet,

Worm Fantasy League Teams

4 Zits	Stephen Jackson	Elvis, Villa, Senna, Hitler
Ajax	Edwin Kowing	Pink, Senna, Blake, Picard
All Very Nasty!!	J. Davidson	Jones, Cantona, Hitler, Hai-Karate
Anonymous (1)	Oliver Hamant	Gazza, Elvis, Hitler, Arthur
Anonymous (2)	John Southworth	Arthur, Skimpy, West, Elvis
Apoclips	Wayne Friday	Tyson, Beavis, Brown, Cobain
Ard Nocks	Owen Smith	Tyson, Beavis, Cobain, Brown
Avengers	Mark Hildreth	Gazza, Skimpy, Camels, Picard
Bad Boys	David Tutton	Cantona, Cal, Holly, Aramis
Bang	Joseph Whelan	Cantona, Tyson, JFK, Hakkinen
Bashers Utd	Patrick Le Garsmeur	Gazza, Camels, Picard, Cantona
Bill Gates Is Rich And I Am Not	Ben Simuyandi	Jesus, Senna, Benn, Blake
Birdfood	Nic Cade	Kirk, Ali, Elvis, Senna
Blasters	Chris Smith	Cantona, Rik, Hancock, Cracker
Bobs	Ken Maginnis	Cal, Blonde, Thongy, Beavis
But's Beef'em Ups	James Butler	Cantona, Hitler, Senna, Beavis
Cannies Killers	Nigel Cann	Naseem, Avon, Cobain, Old Spice
Carnage Inc.	David Burch	Cal, Blake, Hitler, Beavis
Chainsaw Psychos	Alexis M. Liming	Rik, Elvis, Cobain, Stimpy
Cheesy Peas Elite IV	Ben Hargreaves	Duckman, Jesus, Hitler, Naseem
Coleraine Jets	Christopher Wadel	Blake, Holly, Maria, Senna
Come And Have A Go...	James Christie	Cantona, Blonde, Y-Fronts, Lennon
Crackers	David Lee	Avon, Cantona, Boxers, Stimpy
Crows	Sean Steffey	Cobain, Gazza, Lennon, Hakkinen
D.O.A.	Mr. P. G. Williams	Pink, White, Justine, Arthur
Da' Wibblers	Andrew Rudenko	Cantona, Cal, Blake, Picard
Damocles	Neil Pierssene	Villa, Blonde, White, Jesus
Danish Druggies	Richard Joy	Cobain, Bensons, Tyson, Cantona
Dave's Winners	David Dunn	Ferguson, JFK, Marlboro, Tyson
Death	Chris Pearson	Beavis, Lennon, Naseem, Cobain
Destroyers	Matthew Corcoran	Cantona, Jesus, Elvis, Cobain
Devilers	Shane Devlin	JFK, Cantona, Senna, Hitler
Die Hard	Mrs. E. Edwards	Brown, Beavis, Ali, Camels
D-Mob	Mr. T Robertson	Tyson, White, Jesus, Holly
Do The Dead Elvis	Duncan Hughes	Elvis, Cal, Skimpy, Bones
Doubtful Contenders	Robert Cook	Elvis, Pink, Boxers, Kirk
Dwarfers	Andrew Simpson	Pink, Beavis, Elvis, Marlboro
Fiakenieags	Christopher Vincenti	Ali, Villa, Beavis, Camels
Fighters	Are Hoel	Gazza, Pink, Spock, Shell
Fighting Spirit	Joseph Dimmer	Cobain, Tyson, Senna, Beavis
Fishbait	Mark Rushby	Benn, Villa, Senna, Stimpy
Fizzybub W.F.C.	Jonathan Shaw	Cantona, Tyson, Lemon, Hakkinen
Flab 4	Chris Pavli	Tyson, Maria, Holly, Thongy
Full Potato Jacket	Daniel Whittemore	Benn, Brown, Blake, Bensons
Gabson's Guerillas	Mathew Gabson	Tyson, Blonde, Villa, Ratzenberger
Gashers	G. Chequer	Skimpy, JFK, Tim, Gan
God I'm Skilled	Kristopher Sum	Gazza, Hitler, Tim, Kirk
God Knows	William Lee	Pink, Avon, Hakkinen, JFK
Gutcutters	Thomas Olesen	Tyson, Hitler, Senna, Hancock
Haley's	Gavin Haley	Benn, Avon, Hancock, Thongy
Hardmen F.C.	Simon Barrick	Jones, Hitler, Beavis, Tim
Hell-Minths	Steve Lee	Jones, Steve, Avon, Arthur
High-Scream	Dirk Van Den Brock	Cal, Jones, Duckman, Lauda
Hooked	Mr. L. Foster	Hitler, Benn, Holly, Tick
Hounds	Stuart Hastie	Cantona, Hitler, Boxers, Beavis
I Want Earthworm Jim	David Moffoot	Tyson, Jones, Jesus, Stimpy
I Will Not Win	Tim Wheen	Cantona, Benn, Holly, Cracker
I've Got A Big Worm	Paul Allen	Corky, Thongy, Ali, Pink
I've Got Worms	Leon Kessler	Steve, Tyson, Brown, Hai-Karate
Ingram A	Paul Williams	Holly, Beavis, Hai-Karate, Skimpy
Jason Lee, Worse Than	Douglas Johnston	Pink, Thongy, Tick, Stimpy
Jimmy Hill's Chin	Nigel Cooke	Blonde, Duckman, Senna, Avon
Killer Queens	Ross Armstrong	Ali, Blonde, Jesus, Luckys
Le Mare Gang	Nick Le Mare	Cobain, Tyson, Cal, Lauda
Lee's Worms	Lee Cox	Cantona, Tyson, Benn, Grant
Longhurst's Lacerators	Chris Longhurst	Steve, Hitler, Tick, Elvis
Losers	Graham Olek	Gazza, Senna, Boxers, Hai-Karate
Lost Platoon	E. Pickin	Tyson, Cal, Cobain, Lauda
LuqH~NeQH	Leif Cussen	Cobain, Steve, Villa, Duckman
M.U.F.C.	Robert Miller	Gazza, Tick, Hitler, Camels
Madmen	James Hazell	Cantona, Beavis, Hitler, Senn
Madness	Edward Cheung	Gazza, Blake, Tick, Old Spice
Mankey Masters	Baldeep Birdy	Cantona, Tyson, Hitler, Stimpy
Mashzacki	Mr. I. Fisher	Pink, Skimpy, Tick, Grant
Mat's Doom Worms	Matthew Dockrill	Pink, Blonde, Beavis, Cracker
Mental	Christopher Moseley	Elvis, Hitler, Cantona, Jesus
Misfits	James Cooper	Marlboro, Y-Fronts, Ali, Elvis
Monkey Juice	Dave Scorer	Cantona, Tyson, Cobain, Camels
No Mercy	Gareth Jones	Cantona, Villa, Hitler, JFK
Nutters (1)	David Bourne	Cantona, Rik, Brown, Grant
Nutters (2)	Mr. C. Webb	Cantona, Blonde, Y-Fronts, JFK
Orange Juice	Jo Blundell	Gazza, Beavis, Elvis, Hai-Karate
Parker Posse	Lorna Parker	Gazza, Hitler, Beavis, Marlboro
Peter's Pros	Peter Hawes	Ferguson, Tyson, Tick, JFK
Pink Dwarf	John McGuigan	Benn, Hancock, Blonde, Duckman
Pink Preeto's	Harprit Singh-Sehra	Pink, Brown, Stimpy, Cracker
Psycho Sockers	Tim Cadman	Cantona, Benn, Tim, Cracker
Psychos Are Us	Robbie Duff	Naseem, Cantona, Tick, Arthur
Raiders	Austyn Free	Tyson, Blonde, Cobain, Beavis
Ramperkash's	Gary Young	Senna, Hitler, Lennon, Ferguson
Ravers	David Kelly	Ali, Tick, Hitler, Marlboro
Rebels 2000	Michael Lam	Cantona, Senna, Cobain, Stimpy
Reservoir Fiction	Andrew Phillips	Naseem, Hitler, Tick, Lennon
Riddells	Jonathan Riddell	Maria, Holly, Justine, Blake
Rik's Dwarfs	Richard Biott	Cantona, Steve, Hitler, Arthur
Rik's Renegades	Richard Eatock	Cantona, Steve, Boxers, Marlboro
Roboworms	Rhian Duff	Tyson, Blake, Senna, Beavis
Shags	Andy Smith	Stimpy, Hitler, Avon, Grant
Simoneia Wnd'rs	Simon Humphreys	Cantona, Naseem, JFK, Kirk
Skinner's Winners	Martin Skinner	Tyson, Villa, Hitler, Boxers
Slappers	Stuart Merriman	Cantona, Spock, Skimpy, Stimpy
Smithies	Neil Marshall	Cantona, Cal, Lennon, Lauda
Snoop Wormy Worm	Simon Varley	Stimpy, Tyson, Blake, Tim
Society Against Fish Bait	Kashif Butt	Ali, Cantona, Sinbad, Hakkinen
Spaghetti	Russell Trotter	Gazza, Blonde, Hakkinen, Sinbad
Spooks	Richard Knight	Tyson, Blake, Maria, Stimpy
Squidgy Maniacs	Anthony Langford	Pink, Blake, Tick, Marlboro
Squirrels	Simon Murray	Gazza, Hitler, Blake, Shell
Superworms	Corey Duff	Blake, Holly, Hitler, Elvis
T.O.E.	Gareth Stephens	Steve, Cal, Tick, JFK
The 4 Maggoteers	Tino Todino	Cantona, Maria, Boxers, Tick
The 4 Stars	Jonathan Pettit	Cantona, Senna, Hitler, Duckman
The Avengers	Ben Hanson	Gazza, Duckman, Cobain, Luckys
The Beefs	Paul Goodwin	Blake, Maria, Hitler, Elvis
The Chocoholics	Nicholas White	Pat, Jones, Luckys, JFK
The Cleaning Ladies	Kris Long	Steve, Cal, Avon, Brut
The Crapbags	Alan Simpson	Gazza, Cal, Corky, Cracker
The Eviscerators	Andrew Sanders	Naseem, Hitler, Duckman, Hakkinen
The Ex's	Nicholas Dunstone	Pink, Cal, Picard, Kirk
The Fireballs	James Taylor	Steve, Blake, Hitler, Tick
The Floppies	James Robinson	Cantona, Tyson, Justine, Sinbad
The Git	Jamie Johnson	Gazza, Hitler, Senna, Spock
The Good, The Bad...	Nathan Hill	Marlboro, Elvis, Villa, Cantona
The Kinksters	Kieron Lanning	Senna, Holly, Skimpy, Jesus
The Last Worm Scout	S. Jarrett	Avon, Blonde, Pat, Luckys
The Mad Jobs	Steven Shaw	Blonde, Justine, Maria, Hitler
The Nutters	James Green	Jones, JFK, Benn, Beavis
The Parasites	Matthew Band	Tyson, Boxers, Hitler, Avon
The Posse	Richard Ashley	Naseem, Elvis, Holly, Picard
The Psychopathic Killers	Peter Morgan & Jon Porter	Elvis, Senna, Blake, Hitler
The Renegades	Craig Hume	Cal, Tyson, White, Kirk
The Saviours	Nicholas Hutchins	Naseem, Stimpy, Jesus, Hitler
The Squits	John Roughton	Benn, Stimpy, Ferguson, Lennon
The Tapeworms	Tony Armstrong	Elvis, Tyson, Hitler, Y-Fronts
The Terminators (1)	Javier Blanco	Naseem, Blake, Stimpy, Luckys
The Terminators (2)	Gavin Skinner	Cantona, Tyson, Beavis, Lennon
The Warring Factions	Liam Grady	Cantona, Ali, Beavis, Kirk
The Wilber Force	Ian Fernandes	Rik, Villa, Cobain, Beavis
Thongs	J. Taylor	Steve, Blake, Tick, Cobain
Toad's Tadpoles	J. P. Staines	Ferguson, West, Duckman, Camels
Tonyz Team	Anthony Mather	Cantona, Ferguson, Corky, Spock
Trekkie's Revenge	Kenneth O'Neill	Beavis, Brown, Bones, Gazza
Triads	Stephen Middleton	Cantona, Sinbad, Tyson, Holly
Turner's Terrors	Andrew Turner	Nassem, Cobain, Beavis, JFK
Vipers	G. Marchant	Senna, Tyson, Blonde, Jesus
Waxy Flexibility	Sean Mears	Pink, Gan, Tick, Luckys
Wiggly-Wooz	Chris Anderton	Cantona, Tyson, White, Kirk
Wiggy's Worms	Mr. A. T. Griffiths	Jones, Tyson, White, Picard
Wimbish Worm Warriors	Cpl. A. Smith	Ferguson, Avon, Cobain, Lennon
Wonder Wolves	Terry Phillips	White, West, Beavis, JFK
Worm Pate	Matthew Horsman	Steve, Blake, Hitler, Tick
Wormahampton	Richard Dave	Gazza, Beavis, Hitler, Camels
Worminators	Kevin Church	Cantona, Blake, Senna, Ratzenberger
Worms 'R' Us (1)	Mark Bayliss	Naseem, Tick, Senna, Bensons
Worms 'R' Us (2)	Martyn Allan	White, Avon, Blake, Stimpy
Worms And Angels	Mr. P. Jarrett	White, Avon, Senna, Stimpy
Worms Jr.	Francis Chan	Tim, Avon, Senna, Maria
Wormy Squirmy	Katherine Wheen	Ali, Tim, Elvis, Grant
Wouter's Worms	Wouter Land	Cal, Maria, Senna, Tick
Wriggles	David Wright	Cantona, Cal, Hitler, Cracker
Wyrms	Tom Bond	Ali, Jesus, Brown, Hakkinen
X-Worms	Ben Murphy	Pink, Hitler, Stimpy, Lennon
Yanks-Go-Home	D. Capstick	Blonde, Ratzenberger, Benn, Avon

So, next month the results of the first half of the tournament. Until then, sweat!

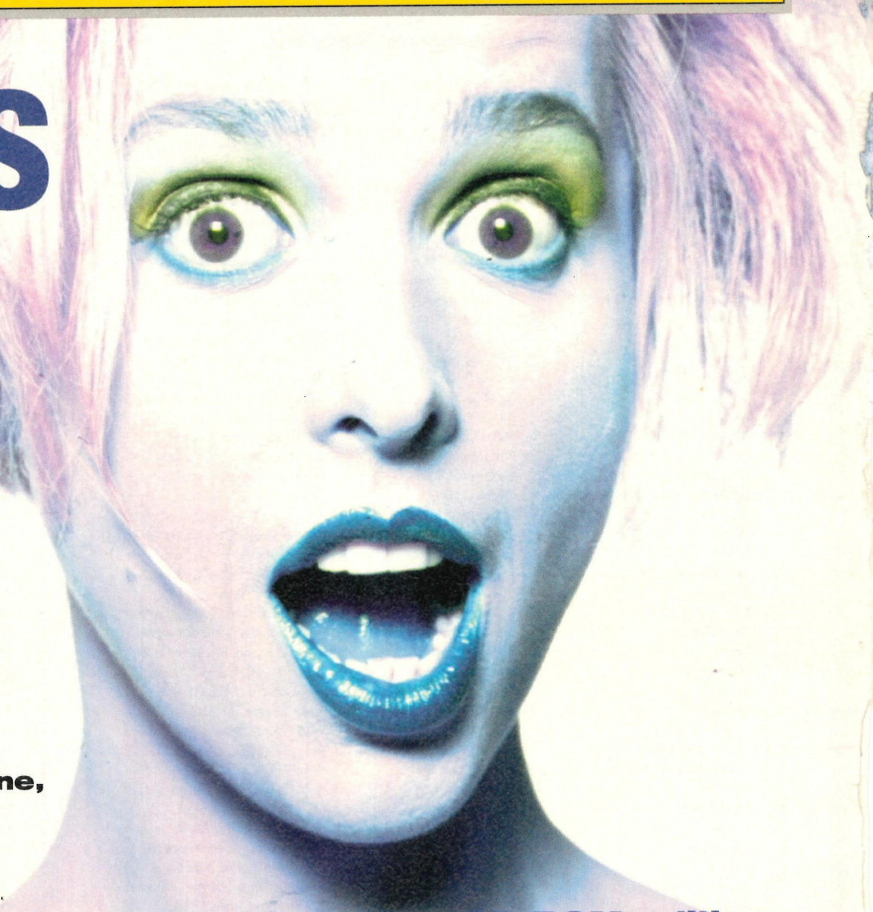
NEXT month

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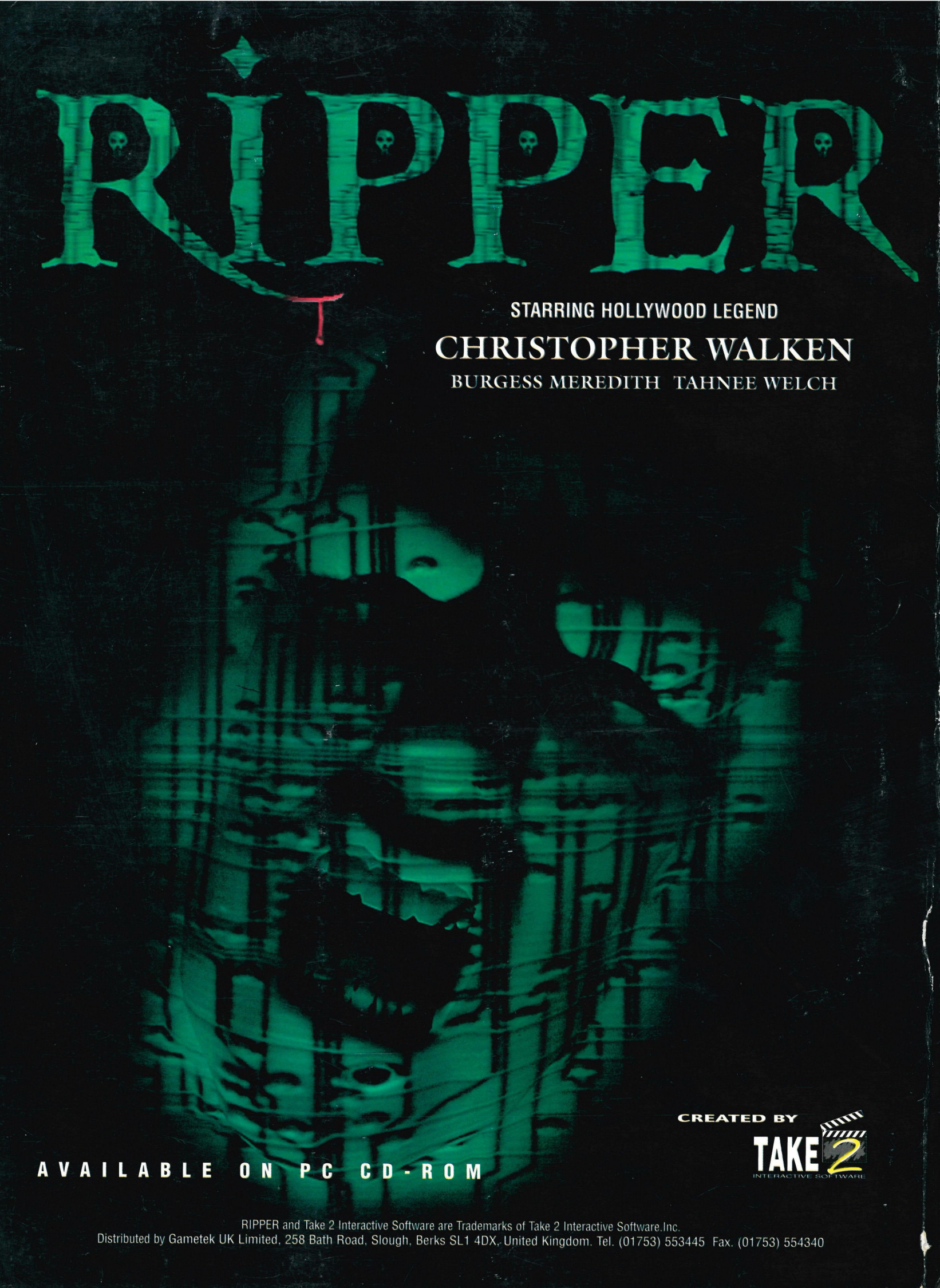
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